OTHER HANDS

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EDITORIAL:
ARNOR... WITH A VENGEANCE

The theme of this double issue is Arnor, and with it we salute the publication of the new edition of *ICE's Arnor* realm module. The original edition of *Arnor* (1994) marked a new beginning for the *MERP* series, and in many ways it remains the flagship for the line; likewise, the second edition exemplifies many of the far-reaching changes that have been taking place (I should hope, for the better) within *MERP* over the three intervening years, so that *Arnor* may continue to serve as a model and an inspiration to future authors.

With this issue I also hope to reaffirm the fundamental *raison d'être* of *Other Hands:* to provide an open forum that celebrates a diversity of viewpoints on Tolkien's world as it relates to role playing—practical and theoretical, critical and appreciative, scholarly and sub-creative. The selection of offerings for this issue embraces all of these perspectives.

I thought it would only be fitting to start things off with an interview with Wesley J. Frank, author of the *Arnor* module, and to find out firsthand what sort of considerations went into the orchestration of this massive tome. I'm sure all will find Wes' words of wisdom interesting and insightful.

Next up is a roster of Angmarean villains that player characters in an Arnor campaign might encounter. Wes originally prepared this material for the first edition of *Arnor*, but space contraints prohibited its inclusion into either edition, and so we present them here.

Since the *Arnor* module included coverage of the city of Tharbad, I thought it appropriate to invite Sam Daish, author of the new *Tharbad* citadel module (currently in preparation), to contribute two pieces relating to his work. The first is "The Beggar-king of Tharbad," an overview of one of the many colorful groups inhabiting the criminal underworld of that city. The second, "A Dog's Life," is a short scenario set in Tharbad.

We are honored to print a pair of independently written essays by Michael Martinez and Lalaith, each of which seeks to synthesize and interpret Tolkien's many references to the inhabitants of Eriador. The inclusion of these well-researched pieces serves, I think, to underline the different kinds of assumptions and inferences one needs to consider when tackling the formidible task of "world-building" in a gaming context. It also illustrates how purely "scholarly" research into Tolkien's world can beome a valuable resource for GMs who want to explore the background of Middle-earth in greater depth.

Finally, I've decided to include a glossary of corrections and modifications to the invented names (primarily Elvish) appearing in the new *Arnor* modules. This will be especially useful for those of you who are familiar with the first edition and want a quick and easy reference guide to how the linguistic end of things has evolved.

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NEXT ISSUE:

On April 1st, 1997...

"Let There Be Strife!"

COMMUNICATIONS

We would like to draw the attention of the role-playing readers to the role playing Game M.E.R.P. ("Middle-earth Role Playing Game") from the American company ICE.

This "crowning glory" of role playing games is a highly dangerous dish for novice tolkienists (and other amateurs) who want to learn more about Tolkien and his world!

Could the modules of this game be drawn from the actual writings of J.R.R. Tolkien? According to the colourful packaging, they are "based on J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings. And "Each module is based on extensive research," according to the notice. But can this be taken seriously? No way! This is sales talk, speech making Gríma Wormtongue couldn't have done it better. ICE intends these claims to reassure the inexperienced reader; the real Tolkien enthusiast (or "tolkiendil" in Elvish) will speedily see through them. Once past the alluring wrapping, there is nothing to be found but pretentious literary essays, and other colourful gimmicks. The purchaser will find in the innumerable modules and aids for the game not a single pertinent analysis, no notes worthy of interest, not the least trace of well considered interpretation, only a huge funhouse mirror.

The game modules, often accompanied by large coloured charts (and what ridiculous ones!), maps, and various bizarre sketches, are full to overflowing with the phoney role-playing stuff this "junk-food" company specialises in. All this company and others like it, the usurpers of the precious "mithril," have to do is stick the Tolkien label on a product for it to become highly marketable. No, the modules of MERP were in no way drawn from some "lost Tolkien writings". Nor do these "small models" (made of "mithril") even respect the "Tolkien vision"; a sort of smoke screen behind which they withdraw cosily with their literary efforts. Nor is all this material drawn from texts supposedly inaccessible to outsiders like ourselves, as the head of the company would have us believe, according to his many brusque and indigestible interviews. This unsavoury character and his minions supply role-players with crazy information, having no relation to Tolkien's work: half-dwarves, a hodgepodge of magic objects, an additional imaginary continent by the inapt name of Morënorë, to mention only the most grotesque errors. What's more, if making up the game were not enough, these scribblers knowingly plunder what a magnificent writer spend years in conceptualising and perfecting to set down in print. Sources are misquoted, dates faked, places wrongly located, coast lines, mountain ranges, and rivers are sloppily drawn. MERP turns out to be not only impossible to use or to play for the person who loves and appreciates Tolkien's writings and wishes to recreate a Tolkien atmosphere in playing a game (although this is quite difficult to do, nearly impossible). Above all, it proves to be harmful for all those, too numerous, who either through lack of curiosity or though excessive reliance on false claims ("Designed with faithful attention to Tolkien's world", allegations that anyone of modest intelligence can see through at a glance) do not take the trouble even to skim the author's numerous works in English before playing the game.

We, the Association of Friends of Tolkien in France, have nothing against RPG in general. Many of us have played and enjoyed the RPG. We are only alarmed by the "game settings" MERP is proposing to the players, but we are not at all concerned about the "MERP rules" or "Rolemaster rules". We only draw attention to the fact that ICE transforms what Tolkien has actually written in his books, and pretends otherwise. When Tolkien says that Dwarves are a "race apart", they ought not to be any Half-Dwarves, and when he say that the Ringwraiths were "Kings" and "Men" it ought not to be any "Wraith Queen" amongst them, when he puts Pelargir 5 miles north of the inflow of the Sirith into the Anduin, it ought to stay there and not to change place, and when he says that Glorfindel of Gondolin and Glorfindel of Rivendell are the same Elf, he means it.

We do not pretend to criticise the "rules themselves". That is how to play "MERP". And we are certainly not trying to find a way "to play according to Tolkien", which would be totally impossible and meaningless. Because even if Tolkien is one of the greatest writer of the XXth century, he wrote romance, not game-modules. Pretend as is doing ICE what he did so in his "books" is pure folly.

Each and every one is free to make up his own rules, and to have fun. Because RPG is aimed at that, don't you think? But, please for your game-settings, do rely more on your imagination than on ICE modules.

School of Elven Studies

Association of Friends of Tolkien in France

FINE PRINT

Other Hands is an international gaming journal devoted to fantasy role-playing set in J.R.R. Tolkien's secondary world of Middle-earth. It is a quarterly, nonprofit publication welcoming submissions dealing with any aspect of gaming in the context of Tolkien's -world: scenario ideas, rule suggestions, gaming product reviews, gamemastering aids, bibliographic resources, essays on Middle-earth, and whatever else our readership would like to see in print. In a word. Other Hands aims to be the definitive Tolkien-related gaming journal for a worldwide role-playing communitiy. Within the pages of Other Hands, the interested gamer may publish materials with reference to any game mechanics he or she chooses (including Rolemaster and Middle-earth Roleplaying). Such gaming material may deal with any time period of Tolkien's world, and need not be bound to what has already seen pring in Iron Crown's modules. Other Hands provides this freedom because it is a nonprofit publication. Subscription rates are as follows: inside the USA — 1 issue $3/4 issues $12; outside the USA — surface, 1 issue $5.50/4 issues $18. Payment should be made to Chris Seeman: PO Box 1213 Novato, CA 94948, USA No Eurochecks, please!

Submissions are welcome in any from (preferably legible), but we prefer if you can to send a file. We use Word for Windows. If there is any question as to the readibility of you file, please save it in ASCII or text-only format and include a hard copy. All submissions must be sent to Chris Seeman: PO Box 1213, Novato, CA 94948 [USA]. Please write me or call if you have any difficulties. My phone number is [415] 892-9066. Please note also that I mav be reached on-line at: **chris1224@aol.com**

DIGITAL HANDS

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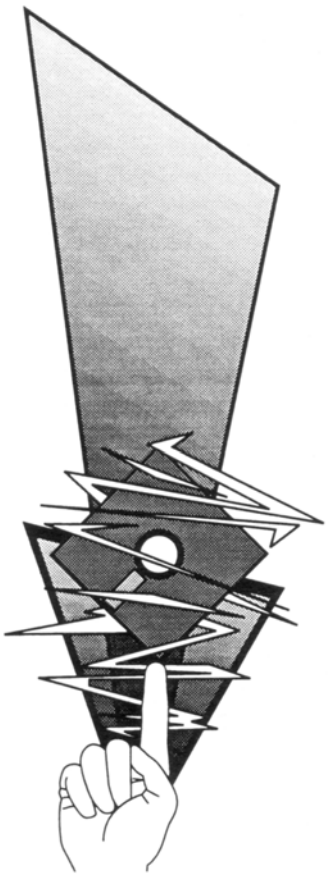
MUD - ROLE PLAYING IN CYBERSPACE

The two Orcs facing us seemed to realize that they would stand no chance. My companions and I smiled grimly as we drew our swords and advanced towards them. I could feel the weight of my weapon, the fabled Iceblade, as magic energy radiated from it. The battle against the Orcs is hardly worth relating. Brom, the Dwarf, got scratched in the arm by a black scimitar, but its edge was fortunately not poisoned. Leaving the corpses behind us, we advanced towards the dark mouth of a cave, wondering exactly what the Orcs had been guarding. I could hear the mage Bildbert starting to mumble the well-known words of a light spell behind me when suddenly a hideous roar rose from inside the cave. Brom whispered one word between clenched teeth: "Dragon."



Does the situation seem familiar? This could be taken from any normal role playing session, but it could just as well be taken from a MUD. On the surface, there are two obvious differences. One being that in a MUD, the computer acts as gamemaster. This is done in the same way as in a text adventure: the player types commands in simplified English, which are then parsed. The other exciting difference compared with normal role playing is that the players are usually spread all over the world, connected to a common server through the Internet. In the example above, Bildbert could be situated in Australia, Brom in Kansas, and I would naturally be sitting here in Linköping, Sweden. A typical MUD on an average day might link a couple of dozen players.

The first MUD was developed in 1979 by Roy Trubshaw and Richard Bartle at Essex University, England. Trubshaw decided that it should have a fantasy setting and Bartle designed the game world drawing inspiration mostly from Tolkien, *D&D* and other role playing games. Today there are hundreds of MUDs on the Internet, and they are of many different kinds. Some, which are close to the original concept of treasure hunting and hack-and-slash, are called Diku. Others, LP MUDs, are geared towards quests. During recent years there has been a strong movement of so called "social MUDs." These—which go by various names such as MUCK, MOO, MUSE or MUSH—are characterized by having little or no combat rules. Users spend their time expanding the game and role playing a character, often being very serious about it. Playing a MUD (mudding) can be very addictive and has been known to ruin exams for more than one student.

Since the original MUD was inspired by Tolkien, the step to making MUDs completely based on Middle-earth was of course very short. Today, there are three such MUDs open and at least eight more in different stages of planning or development.

Those three which are open today interestingly represent the three most popular types of MUDs. *MUME* (Multi Users in Middle-earth) is a Diku MUD. It is primarily based on ICE's interpretation of Middle-earth and its areas are very detailed. It also has a reputation for being one of the hardest Diku MUDs around. Few adventurers live to experience the highest levels. *Elendor* is a MUSH. For a MUSH, it has relatively advanced combat rules, but emphasis is nevertheless on socializing. Those who play well are "promoted" to one of the characters from *The Lord of the Rings*. The third, and the newest of the three, is *The Two Towers*, an LP MUD which eventually will feature a huge quest to find and destroy the One Ring. All these three are set about the time of the War of the Ring.

I would recommend mudding to any gamer with an Internet connection and too much free time. Meeting and playing with people from all over the world can be extremely worthwhile, and exploring the MUD universe is usually very exciting too. One of the few problems I have with MUDs is that since many different people tend to be involved in the building of them, their quality—even within a single MUD — usually varys, to say the least. The MUDs mentioned in this article are all well above average and are herewith recommended.

TELNET (AND HOME PAGE) ADDRESSES FOR MUDS MENTIONED IN THE ARTICLE:

Elendor: ***elendor.sbs.nau.edu 1893 (http://where. com/Elendor)***

MUME: ***mumegw.pvv.unit.no 4242 or shirc.ncsa.uiuc.edu 4242 (http://www.sparta. lu.se/~mumel)***

The Two Towers: ***9999 (http://www.angband.com/towers1)***

QUICK GUIDE TO GET STARTED WITH MUDDING:

All you need to get into a MUD is an Internet connection and a Telnet program. Exactly how Telnet works differs depending on your operating system and software.

Once you have connected to the MUD you will be prompted to enter your character name and password. New players usually just have to fill in a name and password of their choice. If this fails, the name is probably already taken. In some MUDs, you must then choose race, occupation and so on. When this is done, you will enter the MUD and receive a description of your immediate surroundings.

You can move about by means of compass point abbreviations (*n,* *ne,* *e,* ...). If you see an object, such as a book, you can try to *take book,* *examine book,* *read book* or perhaps *open book.* You can also communicate with those close to you with the *say* command, for example *say Hello, I am new here.* The most useful command for the beginner is without any doubt *help.*

The Making of *Arnor*

A Conversation with Wesley J. Frank

Chris Seeman: PO Box 1213, Novato, CA 94948, USA (chris1224@aol.com)

Chris: **How did you first come to take up the task of compiling and revising** the **already existing Arnor material published by ICE?**

Wes: When I decided to do some writing, I sent in three outlines: one for *Near Harad,* one for *Shire* and one for an *Arnor* module, a needed refit of the ICE's older modules set in Eriador, which I think came up in some conversations with Jessica Ney-Grimm. Jessica said that what she needed first was *Arnor,* and that there was a lot of good material out there that I could use in it, so I picked that one. My original thought was that *Near Harad* would be the easiest because it would have less to do with Tolkien's books and thus be less frightening; but *Arnor* was a great opportunity because it gave me a chance to take care of all the complaints I've had from twenty years of role playing.

Chris: **So it was your own experience of running games in that region that drove you to revise the stuff.**

Wes: Yes, it was sort of a put or shut up thing, where I spent all those years playing the game and criticizing, and now I had a chance to do better.

Chris: **What did you see as the major strengths and weaknesses of the earlier modules?**

Wes: Among the early modules, the original older ones such as *Angmor* and *Umbar* weren't connected properly; others, like *Rangers of the North,* were beautiful in concept but very difficult to game in. You couldn't get a feel of what it was like from town to town and in running an adventure. *Cardolan* was much better than that; it basically needed to be tidied up and put into some coherent whole. As for *Hillmen of the Trollshaws*—again, not enough background to know what you were doing when running in the area, so I was able to put in editorial unification and fill in all the gaps in the adventures.

Chris: **So most of the adventures that showed up in the final version were things you added or had run before you actually started work on the module?**

Wes: Actually, I wanted to make efficient use of the material in hand, so I only wrote one complete adventure for *Arnor.* I provided most of the story hooks scattered through the text, the plot leads and small-scale adventures. For the official adventure sections, I put together scenarios from *Rangers* and *Cardolan,* most of which I had played through as a character, and edited them as needed to make them coherent. Where there were gaps or dead spots, where the old material had not been properly play-tested, I added and re-wrote. I turned "The Mithril Room" into an honest dungeon crawl and "Hunt for the Warlord" into a mini-campaign with a gritty military feel to it. I enjoyed that. The one big adventure I put together myself was "The Banners of the High King" (the Second Age one). I had never seen a really high level adventure for Middle-earth, so I was able to cut loose with an entire volley there.

Chris: **What axes did you have to grind when you were writing and drawing all this material together? What things did you want to emphasize or add to it?**

Wes: In terms of general themes, I wanted a large-scale area module to give anybody who read ICE material an idea of what the people were like—the Dúnedain and the Commoners. I was able to put in a lot of detailed material about their society and wanted to give an idea of the people of Arnor as fighting an heroic fight. My favorite quote from *The Lord of the Rings* is the one which talks about a line of tall, stern men - who fought off this horrible enemy for century after century: "...they had a vision as it were of a great expanse of years behind them, like a vast shadowy plain over which there strode shapes of Men, tall and grim with bright swords, and last came one with a star on his brow." And most of the time they were winning. So you find at different points in *Arnor* that most of the bad guys like the Witch-king and the Angúlion—even Rogrog, the War Troll who appears on the cover—wind up getting a shot in the head from somebody because they were there for six hundred years and took a lot of bad defeats in that time. You have a bunch of people here you could be proud of as allies when you have an adventure. That is something that was missing from traditional *D&D* for many years. Humans are about the weakest creatures in the old campaigns. If it were not for the (powerful) *D&D-style* adventurers, they would just be wiped out. This was a chance to get one back for humans, I think.

Chris: **There is also a lot in the background—in the history chapter and in the some of the descriptions of the peoples that inhabit Eriador, like the stuff you do on the Fëahíni and all the different spirits that are around. You give a lot more information about the cosmology of Middle-earth than previous modules have done, and it seems that this material is what you would expect to find in an introduction to *MERP* as a whole.**

Wes: Quite. Something I really wanted to do with this module was put magic in Middle-earth. Some other writers consider Middle-earth to be a non-magical place. In my opinion, it is saturated in magic, but short of magicians. I felt, particularly since reading Tolkien's essay "On Fairy-stories," that he was trying to come up with a background for all English folklore, including fairies, witches, monsters and other strange beings. It is not just a bunch of guys chasing around a few spirits. I wanted to include a background for this, so that I or any other writer could put in something magical—some fantasy into your fantasy, as it were.

Chris: **That has been a problem of the *MERP* line from the very beginning. You have this polarity between people who are using the system because it has neat maps and lots of detail and background, but who are basically working within a *D&D* mindset; and then there are the purists that want to get an experience of Middle-earth as they get from the books, yet maintain a rather doctrinaire view that you can't have all this**

magic running around as ICE presents it. One of the great things about *Arnor* is that you not only say there is magic, but you give concrete examples of locales where it might manifest itself—and on both sides, not just the various fairy peoples that inhabit the various forests of Eriador, but also the Banes of Angmar, that's a great way of integrating magic in a concrete way into a game.

Wes: The Banes of Angmar reflects something I think a lot of people who love Middle-earth have wanted to do: to go in and pick up where Tolkien seemed a little off, a little illogical. Like having a huge area of land completely uninhabited for a thousand years without plausible justification. The Banes of Angmar attempt to explain and rationalize that sort of thing. I love the process of rationalization. I think there are hundreds of Tolkien fans who want not only to cover the gaps and the interesting parts he did not get around to, but also simply to write in Middle-earth. And I got to do it.

Chris: **Did you come up with the concept of the "Traveler's Guide" that appeared in *Arnor?* I think everyone will agree that it is definitely an improvement not only in terms of organization and accessibility, but it's also a much more economical way of conveying local flavor and detail.**

Wes: The only thing like it at the time was the *Northwestern Middle-earth Gazetteer,* which I didn't even know existed until I was through with *Arnor,* much to my chagrin (continuity between the two works is poor). The inspiration for it came from my own sense of detail. I wanted to write something interesting about each town in Eriador. I figured that this would be the way to create a large scale module with something happening everywhere. Give people a grip on what's going on, no matter where they go. I've read many kinds of modules and fantasy works over the years, and the most brilliant work on that count is done for *Warhammer* and *Call of Cthulhu*— beautiful gazetteer work, very detailed, and you can sense the authors' joy when they are working on the small scale as well as on the larger themes. I wanted to create that for Middle-earth. It's a good way of organizing information so that you can transit from the small scale to the large scale. It was very successful in *Arnor* and I am glad to see other folks picking up the habit their own module projects.

Chris: **"Rangers of the North" was the other bit—not the module but the actual section you wrote in the *Arnor* module, where you detailed how the Dúnedain lived after the fall of Arthedain and had some lists of things for them to do during that period.**

Wes: **I** am very proud of that. I had to put the chapter together on the premise that we were going to give the world of the Rangers, in a small space, in enough detail for a campaign. Aragorn is my favorite character in *The Lord of the Rings.* I read about him and sense the depth of his intellect and his spirit and that wonderful concept of a people who understand that they are fighting a war that is going to outlast them, but who still have the courage and the conviction to carry it through. So I conceived them as a society of intellectuals — Aragorn is a very learned man from a society that operates on a very small scale (a few hundred people in three villages). You can compare it to the military holy orders in Europe, but with a Puritan, semi-monastic element. You have to include the idea of a small group of people who are attending to the daily chores of survival, but at the same time passing on a body of knowledge to their heirs and using it to make them, as fighters, superior to anyone else around them. They have to take on numerous foes while operating through a vast area with very small numbers. I always stand up for the thinking man as warrior, as a reaction to the Conan theme (in fantasy literature and in role playing games, especially *De3D).*

Chris: **That is good material for some future module, just like with *The Northern Waste*—the author simply took your two-page description of Forochel and generated a two hundred page manuscript off of it.**

Wes: I love that and it is a great compliment. It is something I had in mind when I was scoping (imagining) *Arnor.* I wanted to give people a springboard for doing all the modules and adventures I was looking for all my years as a player. That was the opportunity that came with *Arnor:* to do something that would give other people a step up the ladder.

Chris: **You said that you had presented a proposal for a *Shire* module along with the *Arnor* proposal. Did the fact that you wrote *Arnor* first change any of your notions about the *Shire* or influence the way that you wrote that second module?**

Wes: It didn't influence it thematically. It was a good way to set up the *Shire* module — by setting up the larger society first. The *Shire* is another project I have always wanted to do because it always goes back to traditional fantasy—Hobbits tend to get belittled, so I wanted to put together their society. After all, they are more like us than anyone else in Middle-earth, so *The Shire* allowed me to show them as being able to take care of their own business much the same as the Dúnedain in *Arnor.* I designed the *Shire* module as I was writing *Arnor,* but in doing so I didn't change much of I what I originally had in mind. Virtually nothing had been done about the *Shire* prior to my proposal. Jessica said that mine was the first outline she had ever seen for a *Shire* module that was the least bit exciting, because it actually posited that something interesting could happen there.

Chris: **That is often the challenge for *MERP* writers, because the nature of Tolkien's world pushes the bounds of conventional fantasy gaming. Many of the earlier modules were quite understandably written from the perspective of your average adventuring party who were assumed to have certain invariable goals (e.g., going in and sacking Carn Dûm with no other thought that you could have any other kind of adventure in Angmar). With *The Shire* and *Arnor* and many other cases, it really does force one to think of different kinds of adventures and different kinds of motivations for characters.**

Wes: The problem with Middle-earth is that the colorful titles you want are associated with places where there is so much power concentrated that it takes a lot of effort to come up with an adventure for them. You are more fortunate in the cities because wherever there are large populations of humans, there are adventures. On the other hand, what about Fangorn? It's pretty peaceful (although I have set some good adventures there in my campaign). As much as I enjoyed reading the *Lórien* module and the Eregion section that came with it, coming up with a good adventure there was difficult. It requires that you use it for a different kind of adventure—for politics or personal interaction —though I once ran a campaign where a character went in and wrecked Galadriel's mirror. All the players are still steamed about that. (They are not welcome in Lórien anymore.) I have every module that ICE put out and enjoyed reading them. I enjoy the challenge of taking the drier ones and creating adventures for them.

Chris: **For sheer reading *pleasure, Arnor* comes out on top. For example, in the chapter on the geography or the flora and fauna you have a very nice flowing narrative of the land itself which is interesting to read. *Arnor* definitely has a very engaging natural history to it.**

Wes: **I** have always loved to read about geography myself, and -wanted to make my writing on the topic as efficient and colorful as possible.

Chris: **Thanks you very much for your time.**

Servants of Angmar

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The following essay may be treated as Section 8.7 of the Arnor: The People, *as it was originally designed for inclusion in that book. Of the five characters described in detail, two, Sarkan and Harluinor, are drawn from Section 6.2.5 of the* Angmar *realm module. Umaug, the true master of the Oiolad and the South Downs, is described in the Cameth Brin entry in Section 4.0 of* Arnor: The Land, *while Bavabbêth and Zimrubâr the Unseen are here described for the first time.*

The Chain of Decision in Angmar

It could be said that every Goblin slop-hog and Mannish privy-scrape in Angmar harbors plots against Arthedain and ambitions for winning the Witch-king's favor by bringing on the destruction of the hated Dúnedain. Most of these schemes are doomed to wither in the cold air and oppressive, dungeon-bleakness of Angmar's fortresses. Few among the Witch-king's servants are granted the power to plot war and subversion. Fortunately for the Free Peoples, fewer still of this fanatical cadre actually have talent enough to execute their plans in some dangerous fashion. Even the elite of Angmar are hobbled by their own bigotries and the venality and brutishness of their minions. Over and over, through centuries of conflict, the best laid plans of this circle of fanatics have gone astray. Their victories, such as the subversion of Rhudaur, the destruction of Cardolan, and the cursing of the Barrow-downs, have been telling blows; but Arthedain, the heartland of the northern Dúnedain, still stands. Its wisdom and its steel have held immortal evil at bay for centuries, and its people intend to hold for some centuries more.

The Witch-king, who has final say on the grandest of the intrigues against the Free Peoples, is a supernatural creature, often too distant from the everyday world to tend to lesser matters. The Angúlion, the Black Númenórean sorcerer who serves as the Witch-king's steward, is responsible for the realm's day-to-day administration and diplomacy. Ulgarin Twilight, a Half-elven sorceress from eastern Endor, holds the post of Speaker of the Dark Cult. The military priests of the cult hold most of Angmar's governmental posts and supply the manpower for the Witch King's schemes of subversion. Both Ulgarin and the Angúlion dispatch spies and assassins into the western lands on a regular basis—usually (but not always) after consulting each other.

The Angúlion, often preoccupied with matters in Carn Dûm, tends to assign tasks to favored minions and let them take the glory or blame on their return from the west. While less isolated intellectually than his undead master, he has, through years of isolation in the Witch-king's citadel, lost some of his understanding of Arthadan society and habitually underestimates the difficulties of dealing with his foes. Ulgarin, who has been proselytizing the Cult of Darkness and fomenting sinister conspiracies for several thousand years, enjoys the game for its own sake and knows her enemies better. She takes a more active role in planning and running missions in Eriador, but also performs the same service in the distant lands of Rhovanion and Rhûn. Her far-ranging responsibilities sometimes keep her from putting all her attentions towards her more dangerous enemies in the west. At important points of decision in her operations, Ulgarin's servants may find her unavailable.

The Mornarturi, the five military leaders of Angmar, also have authority to send raids, rangers, and scouts across the frontiers. All but the most limited of these raids are, in theory, approved by the Angúlion, but the deviousness and ambition of these men will often lead to their plans being misreported and uncoordinated, a weakness that clever Arthadan leaders use to their advantage. Of the generals, the two most likely to cause trouble for adventurers are Warlord Dairkan, the commanding general and the most powerful mortal Man in Angmar, and Warlord Sakalurë, Warden of the Udanoriath. Sakalurë coordinates the frontier defenses in these large No-man's Lands between Angmar and Arthedain. He organizes raids, questions prisoners, receives reconnaissance reports, and regularly tours the outposts.

All of these leaders are described fully in the *Angmar* module and are unlikely to venture into Arthedain or neutral territory. Five of their more important minions, however, regularly travel out of Angmar to conduct personal spying missions and otherwise advance Carn Dûm's subversive plots. They are therefore available to be encountered somewhere in the divided kingdoms.

Sarkan the Silent

There are several *hoerkal,* elite military units, in Angmar. Two of them, the rangers and the trackers, both hand-picked by Warlord Dairkan, handle much of Angmar's special missions and important reconnaissance, operating in small groups of two to six and bullying whatever cooperation they need out of the local Orcs and soldiers. The rangers, typically religious fanatics who work under direct instructions of the warlords and priests, have no significant leaders of their own. The trackers, who do more mundane work, are led by Sarkan the Silent, a Brygath scout from distant Rhûn.

Sarkan, a stoic, black-haired, dark-faced Easterling, is far more intelligent than the stony face he shows to strangers and enemies. He came to Angmar in the baggage of his mercenary father and has spent forty years "learning the country." Sarkan speaks five languages and can scout plains, mountain and woodland like one born in them. He is devoted to the service of the Witch-king and is completely evil, often displaying to his men the kind of casual, gory brutality that passes for manliness among the horse barbarians of Rhûn. The bitter, hardened Rhudaurrim who make up most of his command seem impressed by it.

Sarkan is clever enough to know the kind of show a leader must put on for his men. He will eviscerate a prisoner to show how iron-hard he is, tend the wounds of his injured trackers with his own hands, then kill the wounded man himself when pursuit is catching up to his party and a sacrifice must be made. Sarkan's one great failing is his bigotry; he has a pervasive contempt for the "soft" Dúnedain that subverts his judgment and leads him to constantly underestimate them. He tends to succeed more often executing others' plans, rather than his own. The Angúlion, who is more comfortable with his Easterling officers than with Northmen or Dúnedain, often gives Sarkan more information about the raids he is sent on than even the dark priests or black rangers officially commissioned to the task.

Sarkan

Level: 15.

Race: Brygath (Easterling).

Home: Carn Dûm.

Hits: 85 **Melee OB:** 90ss **Missile OB:** 85cp **AT:** RL/9 (-35). Profession: Ranger.

MERP Stats: Co 93, Ag 96, Ig 82, St 99, Pr 88, It 93.

RM Stats: Co 93, Ag 97, SD 91, Me 77, Re 86, St 99, Qu 94, Pr 88, In 95, Em 90.

Skills: Administration 40, Amb 14, Angmarean Military Gossip 50, Arnorian Geography and History 40, Climb 90, Disarm Trap 40, Leadership 60, Orkish Culture 40, Perception 100, Pick Lock 50, Ride 70, Set Trap 50, S/H 120, Track 110.

Appearance: 77.

Principal Items

+ 10 Bow of Wolf-slaying. Works against all canines.

+ 10 Shorts-word. Delivers a secondary electrical critical.

Bone Earring. Acts as a x 2 Channeling PP multiplier.

Exotic Herbs. All Easterling in nature. He does not trust the local remedies, believing them to have been bred by the Elves and Dúnedain.

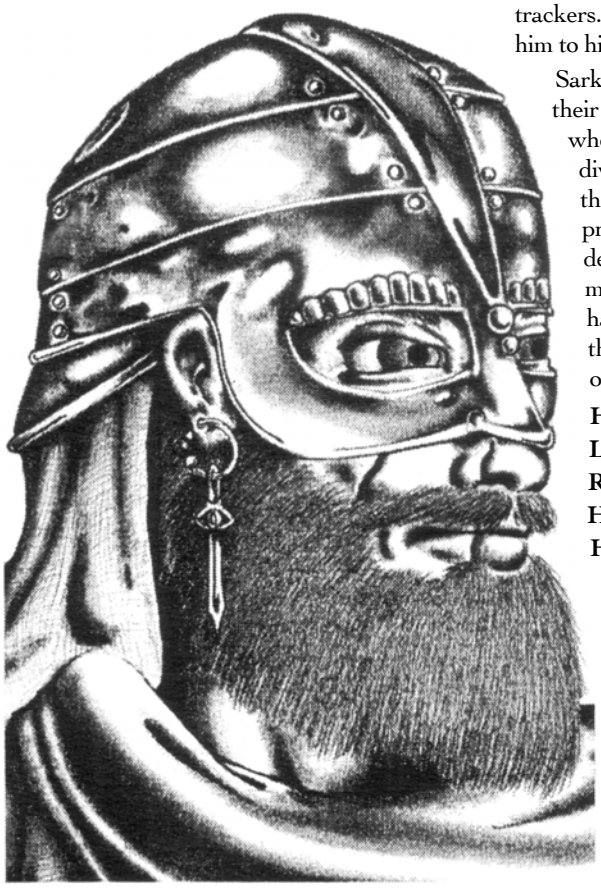
Special Powers (30PPs)

MERP: knows all Ranger lists and 2 Open Channeling lists.

RM: knows 5 base Ranger lists to 20th level, including Nature's Guises, and 2 Open Channeling lists to 10th level.

Wolf Companion

Hardfang, Sarkan's tracking wolf, is smaller than the war-wolves he meets among the Orcs of Angmar, but has the presence and toughness required to face down the great beasts (+10 to reaction and OB against wolves and dogs.) A charm sewn into the fur of Hardfang s neck has extended his life span, seals wounds (1/rd reduction to any bleeding wound) and also gives him a +20 RR bonus against the fear and energy draining of undead and demons. It will also cause him to return to Middle-earth as an undead warg 1-10 days after his death. Sarkan is fond of Hardfang, and his revulsion at this enchantment will leave him sick and distracted for months.



HARLUINOR

A big, handsome, rough-hewn Northman, Harluinor is an efficient second-in-command of the Witch-king's trackers. Blond, bearded, scarred, but capable of good cheer, he takes care of his "people"—by which he means both the men and wolves of his company—and provides a lighter touch of command to contrast with his grim captain, Sarkan the Silent. Harluinor, while from a tribe dwelling east of the Misty Mountains, comes from a trading family and has traveled among the Northmen of Eriador all his life. He is thoroughly familiar with the history of the Northmen, back down to the wars of Númenórean imperialism in the Second Age, and is fanatically committed to the eradication of the Dúnedain of Arnor. While less brutal than his captain or his other superiors, Harluinor's smiling face can reveal a bitter, cynical cruelty when need arises.

Sarkan the Silent is an Easterling and cannot pass for an Eriadorian. This leaves Harluinor free to specialize in infiltration missions. He has a traders familiarity with the towns and trading posts of Eriador. Harluinor often walks openly into Arthadan villages to check them out. On other occasions he has passed himself off as a Northman mercenary recruit and served with the companies of Northmen paid to guard against his own trackers. These acts of cool courage endear him to his men.

Sarkan and Harluinor were chosen for their positions by an Angmarean warlord who did not trouble himself about their divergent personalities. Surprisingly, the two men get along in a reasonably professional manner. Harluinor despises the priests and other ranking minions of the Angmarean court, and has no interest in Sarkan's job. Hence, the two captains are able to trust each other, something rare in Angmar.

HARLUINOR

Level: 15.

Race: Estaravë (Rural Man).

Home: Carn Dûm.

Hits: 90 **Melee OB:** 95fa **Missile OB:** 95sp **AT:** RL/9 (-35).

Profession: Ranger.

MERP Stats: Co 92, Ag 98, Ig 78, St 98, Pr 87, It 88.

RM Stats: Co 92, Ag 98, SD 89, Me 79, Re 77, St 98, Qu92, Pr87, In 90, Em 81.

Appearance: 85.

Skills: Mv 5, Acting 60, Amb 16, Climb 90, Disarm Traps and Pick Locks 50, Disguise 50, Dunadan Racial Slander 60, Furs 40, Northman History 50, Perception 80, Set Traps 50, S/H 90, Track 90, Tavern Banter 55, Trading 45, Trickery 50.

PRINCIPAL ITEMS

+10 Spear of Wolf-slaying. Also good for killing the hounds which the Arthedain use to patrol the frontier; it will return to him 3x/day.

+ 10 Falchion. With which he prefers to melee.

Good-luck Charm. An Arthadan lord's knucklebones on a platinum chain; they are enchanted to act as a +3 spell adder.

SPECIAL POWERS (15PPS)

MERP: he knows all Ranger lists.

RM: he knows 5 Ranger lists to 20th level including Nature's Guises.

WOLF COMPANION

Serti, a stout, well-trained animal with a gentler disposition than most wolves sired at Carn Dûm, is Harluinor's constant companion. She has a touch of Faerie blood and is unnervingly intelligent, +30 against *Fear*, *Sleep* or mental enchantments, and can hear her master's voice a mile away under any conditions.

BAVABBÊTH, MASTER OF GATHERING

(Alias: Pedalagos)

This dangerous master spy was born, under the name Orgildir, to a respectable Dúnadan family of Cardolan soon after the breakup of Arnor. A member of a group of mystics striving to achieve immortality, or some semblance thereof, he was too public in his rather strident claims against the Gift of Men (mortality) and was suppressed by the direct order of King Thorondur. Taking the name Bavabbêth (Ad. "Speaker to Storms"), he fled the Dúnadan kingdoms and pursued his studies in various other realms in Endor.

The ultimate need of his research, and the ultimate reason for its suppression, was ingredients from the body of an Elf. Eventually, in a distant land, Bavabbêth found an Elf evil enough to deserve death, and completed his work. Possessed of an extended life, with only some occasional potions and elixirs to maintain his vitality, Bavabbêth felt himself tainted by the crimes he had committed to achieve his goal. He would die, somehow, someday, and his philosophy taught him that his fate would be hideous, either trapped as an undead creature in this world or taken beyond Middle-earth to be judged by Eru, the creator of mortal Men. Too proud and stubborn, at first, to admit that he had created his own damnation, Bavabbêth set himself against the Arnorians who had denied him and driven him away. He joined forces with the dark cults plotting the northern kingdoms' destruction.

Hundreds of years later, Bavabbêth has lost much of his bitterness, but his destiny is set and he has little remaining in the way of motivation save his professional pride as a spy and sorcerer. The Elvish components Bavabbêth requires for his Elixir of Invariance have been acquired over the centuries by methods he can rationalize if he avoids any complicated arguments. Bavabbêth still dislikes the Dúnedain and Elves, but does not bother himself to hate them. This lack of fervor has kept him from rising to any higher position than "Master of Gathering" in the service of the Witch-king. This is the Lord of Angmar's loss, for Bavabbêth's rational, coolly logical mind makes him a consistently deadly foe of Arthedain; his intelligence gathering is methodical and productive, his plots are rational and often successful.

Most of the Angmarean elite believe Gandalf the Grey to be an Elf or Half-elf, a long-lived Dúnadan sorcerer, or a legend built from several wizards with similar names. Bavabbêth is one of the few willing to believe that a Maia might walk the earth in such a mundane form, just to meddle in the affairs of men. The Grey Pilgrim and the Speaker to Storms have never met, but each thinks he knows the other well and each holds precious any bit of information he might gather on the other's plans.

Bavabbêth has the appearance of a Dúnadan male of average size and good health, with just a hint of frost around the temples and a weary look about the eyes, only occasionally touched by the light of a wry, ironic humor. He often travels in disguise, but prefers his old-style robes with his tasseled cap and a staff or walking stick. Bavabbêth has a sense of honor lacking in other Angmarean agents, which he rationalizes as a necessary component of deal-making. He makes agreements and sticks to them, and avoids death and viciousness on an individual level. This has allowed him, on occasion, to slip out of situations wherein a dark priest or black ranger would have had to die fighting his outraged enemies.

BAVABBÊTH

Level: 29.

Race: Dunadan, magically extended and supported life.

Home: Carn Dûm, in apartments known to few; he is seldom there, but is often found traveling in Eriador.

Hits: 180 **Melee OB:** 80qs **Missile OB:** 60da **AT:** No/2 (-65), butCh/15vs slash and puncture criticals.

Profession: Mage/Magician.

MERP Stats: Co 83, Ag 82, Ig 101, St 78, Pr 98, It 95.

RM Stats: Co 83, Ag 80, SD 95, Me 99, Re 101, St 78, Qu84,Pr98, In 95, Em 81.

Appearance: 95.

Skills: 145DS, 58 BS, MAst (II) 40, Mv 15, Acting 85, Administration 70, Amb 5, Card games 50, Chess 45, Climb 60, Diplomacy 70, Disarm Trap 40, Falsification 50, Gambling 50, Perception 70, Pick Lock 50, Poetry 40, Public Speaking 80, Ride 70, Singing 30, S/H 40, Tracking 30, Trickery 90, all other magical skills 100.

PRINCIPAL ITEMS

The Storm Staff. An ancient Númenórean artifact, made of gnarled wood struck and burned by lightning. It has allowed Bavabbêth to draw power and knowledge from the winds and storms for his magic. It itself casts 40 PPs of the Nature's Lore list per day, acts as a x 4 multiplier, and allows 40 points of spells to be cast through it without preparation each day. The bearer is +30 to Perception regarding weather and the skies around him. It is also a +20 weapon and does an extra electrical critical on every strike. Bavabbêth can simply "touch" someone with it to do an "A" electrical crit without a full combat swing.

Robes. These are +20 to DB and RR, proof against all but the most extreme effects of rain, snow and chill, and also halve the effects of fire and lightning attacks. Their weave provides the protection of chainmail against slash and puncture criticals.

Ring. Made of platinum with seven small diamonds set around the outer edge. It is +20 to DB and RR. It gives him a additional +30 resistance to all scrying and detection magic.

LESSER ITEMS

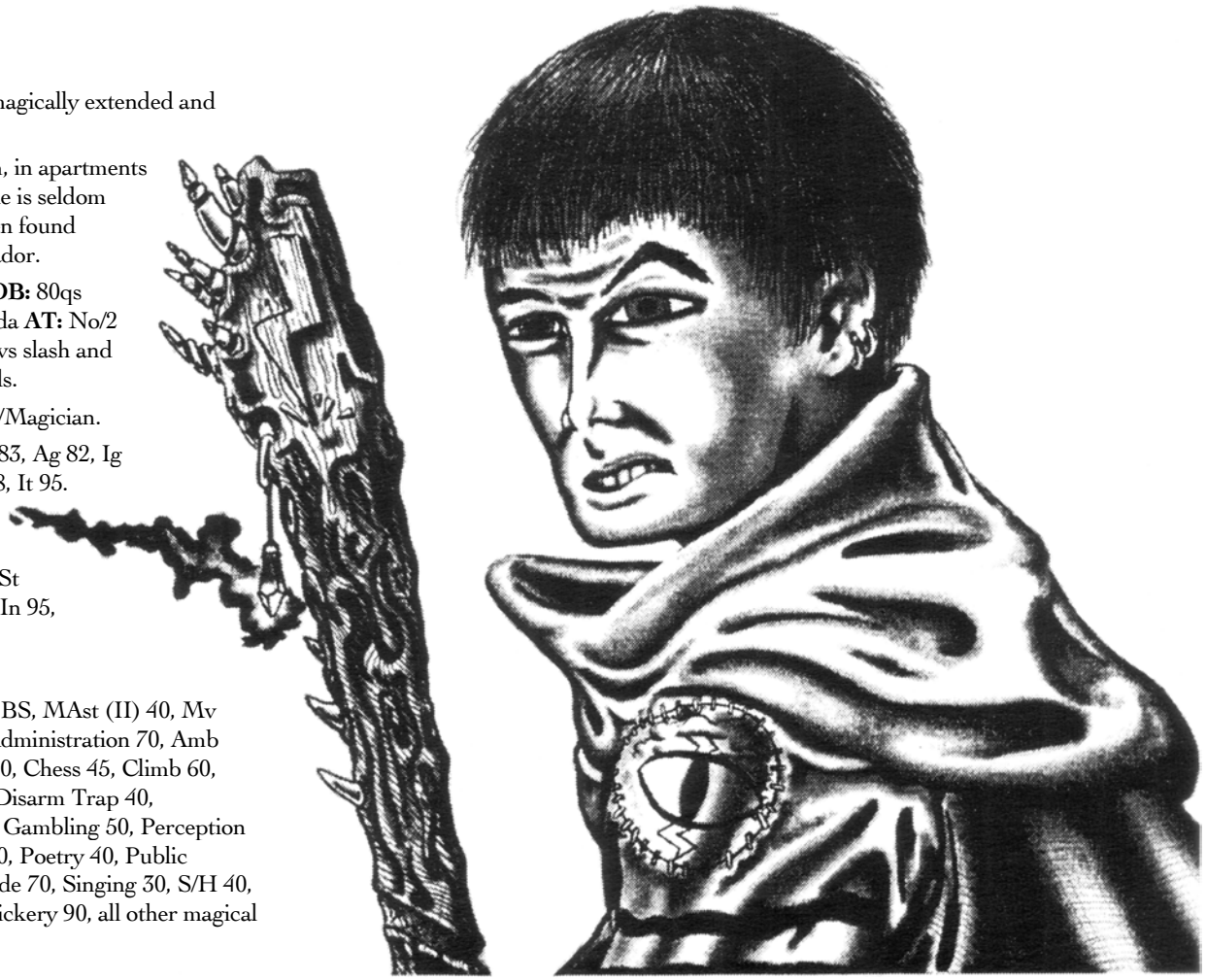
Amulet. An Essence +2 spell adder; it also casts a Shield spell instantly whenever its wearer is attacked from the front. His tasseled cap gives him Dwarvish night vision and the protection of a +20 open helm.

Silver Spoon. *Purifies* any food or drink simply by being touched to the substance or its container, up to 10x/day. His shoes cast 30 points of the Moving Ways list or the *Run* spell per day.

SPECIAL POWERS (348 PPS)

MERP: he knows all open Essence and Mage spell lists, plus Nature's Lore. Bavabbêth knows all the languages that might be spoken in Eriador and 90% of those spoken in all of western Endor.

RM: Bavabbêth knows all Magician base and closed Essence lists to 20th level, and all open Essence lists to 10th. He knows the Channeling spell list Weather Ways as an Essence list. He can also cast all the spells from the following lists that might be applied to the open air and weather, knowing them as a single Weather Control Essence list known to 25th level: Gas Destruction, Fluid Destruction, and Nature's Lore.



ZIMRUBÂR THE UNSEEN, MASTER OF GATHERING

(Alias: Tarvorharn)

Less experienced but more "correctly" enthusiastic than Bavabbêth, his chief rival, the Unseen is the primary organizer of the Angúlion's more complicated schemes in Eriador. A handsome, finely built, articulate, intelligent, well-mannered fanatic, Zimrubâr idealizes what the College of Dark Priests in Angmar wish of their students.

Zimrubâr also serves a model of what the Witch-king hopes to make of the lands and people of old Arnor. He has been raised in Angmar almost from birth. Zimrubâr was taken by the Troll-warlord Rogrog from the tent of a great Dúnadan lord at the battle of the Tyrn Hodhath in T.A. 1409 when only a few days old. He may be a descendant of Dúnadan royalty. Rather than use him as a sacrifice, the Angúlion turned him over to a captive wet nurse to save his life and raise him as an example of the quality of his religious schools. Zimrubâr has well repaid his efforts, showing great gifts for the kind of complicated political games and demoralizing subversion that are considered high art around the temples in Carn Dûm and Litash. In addition, Zimrubâr spends time every year in Arthedain and Cardolan, risking his life routinely and escaping oftentimes only through his considerable skills and a supposed blessing granted him in his youth by the Lord of Darkness.

Zimrubâr's labors have paid off in spectacular fashion. The company of dark priests and rangers he led into the Barrow-downs in the wake of the Great Plague succeeded in triggering an invasion of evils spirits. This crushing blow to Dúnadan morale and civilization had been in the Witch-king's mind for centuries. The success of the enchantment, dependent on Zimrubâr's careful dispersal of artifacts and spells throughout the downs, broke a two hundred year stalemate in the long war with the Dúnedain. It also confirmed Zimrubâr as the favorite of dark priestess Ulgarin, and reinforced his formidable arrogance and vanity.

With a handsome face and a fine, highly polished speaking voice, the Unseen passes easily and charms the innocent wherever he travels in Eriador. Persuading loyal servants that their masters mean them ill, seducing faithful wives into adulterous liaisons, all these things come naturally and pleasurably to him. Only rarely does a diabolical light come into his eyes and betray his sadistic intent. Humiliating defeats have also come his way, but he shakes them off, knowing he must ultimately prevail and will probably enjoy himself doing it.

ZIMRUBÂR

Level: 18.

Race: Torfir, though possibly of higher lineage. Home: Carn Dûm, but is usually traveling in Eriador or visiting one of his many mistresses in Angmar and Rhudaur.

Hits: 190 **Melee OB:** 130qs/ss **Missile**

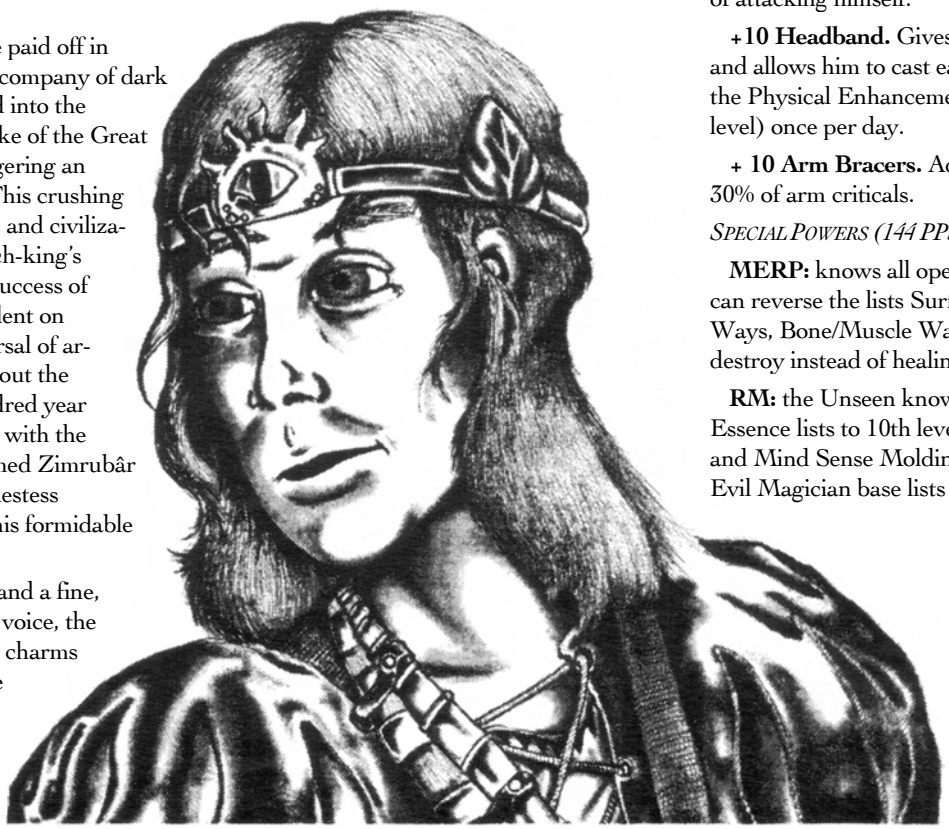
OB: l00da **AT:** Ch/14 (-80)**. Profession:** Animist/Evil Magician (he is called a Sorcerer-Priest).

MERP Stats: Co 88, Ag 99, Ig 97, St 91, Pr 100, It 92.

RM Stats: Co 88, Ag 99, SD 95, Me 99, Re 95, St 91, Qu 88, Pr 99, In 92, Em 77.

Appearance: 100.

Skills: BS 36, DS 45, Mv 30, Acting 85, Amb 18, Climb 45, Disarm Traps 40, Disguise 80, Foraging 40, Herbalism 50, Pick Locks 55, Poison Lore 85, Ride 45, Seduction 90, Traps 55, S/H 60, Swim 50, Tactics 40, Track 35, Trickery 50.



PRINCIPAL ITEMS

Staff of Questioning. +15 quarterstaff, has red *laen* "veins" that wrap around a black staff head in the shape of a human heart. Will cast 40 points per day of 1st to 14th level RM Flesh Destruction spells (or any reversed MERP curing spells). There is a permanent illusion on it that can be summoned up to make it seem an ordinary staff.

+15 Eket. Delivers an extra slash critical; the wound will be tainted if the attacker fails to resist a 10th level Curse, so that any treatment, magical or otherwise, to stop any bleeding will have only one half its normal effects, rounded down.

Leather Armor. A shirt and leggings that protect as +20 chain and greaves without encumbering the wearer.

Medallion of Darkness. This artifact has extended Zimrubâr's life and will eventually turn him into a wraith. It is a x 4 PP multiplier, is +20 to general defense, gives him the benefits of a 103 Constitution, and reduces bleeding wounds and stuns by 1 point each/round.

Dagger of Poisons. +15 weapon with four chambers that allow it to drip four different poisons; which one is active in a given round is up to the wielder. Zimrubâr prefers a 3rd level *kcftak* poison of his own blending that causes terrifying illusions, causing the victim to go berserk, with a 10% chance per round of attacking himself.

+10 Headband. Gives him 100' night vision and allows him to cast each of the spells on the Physical Enhancement list (up to 10th level) once per day.

+ 10 Arm Bracers. Add to RR and negate 30% of arm criticals.

SPECIAL POWERS (144 PPS)

MERP: knows all open Essence lists and can reverse the lists Surface Ways, Blood Ways, Bone/Muscle Ways, and Creations to destroy instead of healing or creating.

RM: the Unseen knows 6 open and closed Essence lists to 10th level, Illusion Mastery and Mind Sense Molding to 20th, and all the Evil Magician base lists to 20th level.

Umaug

"He was that mos frightening of creatures: a rational Goblin; an intelligent Orc. I stayed to the back of the caravan and kept my peace, wondering whether my usual disguise might not serve. I would not let his eyes meet mine! Who knew what that black gaze might catch?"

Thus Gandalf the Grey first met, along the Old East Road near the Last Bridge, an old nemesis. Umaug, Chieftain of the Breakbacks, had first made his name as one of the wolf-rider captains who swept over the Baranduin in T.A. 1409 and scourged the Elves of northern Siragalë, thus clearing ground for the future Hobbit settlement and getting a reputation that forced him to spend a century out on the plains of Rhûn, avoiding Elvish vengeance. Either that experience or something unusual in his bloodline gave Umaug a competence and survival instinct unique among the Orc-captains of Angmar. Like Bavabbêth, Umaug's calm judgment and his willingness to throw in a losing hand make the Angmarean leadership suspicious of him. But, like Bavabbêth, he is too valuable to be discarded.

The Breakbacks are wolf-riders. Operating out of a fort called Blind Ox, on the banks of the River Hoarwell just west of Cameth Brin, they are nominally assigned to patrol the river valley on behalf of the puppet-king, Ervegil of Rhudaur. In fact, they are the Angúlion's eyes, ears and legs for most of Cardolan and southern Arthedain. The Breakbacks run messages and supplies to Dagorhir the Warlord in Minhiriath, pick up spies' reports from secret drops within a bow-shot of Tharbad, and escort assassins to within walking distance of the villages of Breeland. They are the true lords of the South Downs, establishing supply dumps, guiding Orc-raids, and picking off snoopers from Dol Tinereb and Faerdor who try to intervene.

Umaug is not imposing in appearance. As tall as a Dwarf, he is not bulky. His warty face looks unshaven, and his glittering, *mithril*-tipped canine teeth are more startling than frightening. His gear is well kept, decorated in the broken-skeleton symbol of the Breakbacks and otherwise reflecting a well-brushed pale greyness that clever opponents might take for sensible camouflage. Umaug's manner and glance are what frighten the sophisticated observer. He sees all that goes on around him, moves quickly and carefully to "size up" matters, and rides his wolf like one born to the harness. When tending to "his trade," which is scouting and battle, Umaug gives orders in a rough but clear and unmistakable whistling howl. He then deploys his force expertly, without a step of wasted motion, keeping a firm control over his savage Goblinish temper until the moment arrives to strike home for victory and blood.

Umaug

Level: 15.

Race: Common Orc.

Home: Blind Ox Vale, near Cameth Brin.

Hits: 150 **Melee OB:** 145sc **Missile OB:** 150sb **AT:** Ch/13(-70).

Profession: Warrior/Fighter.

MERP Stats: Co 89, Ag 91, Ig 99, St 93, Pr 101, It 98.

RM Stats: Co 89, Ag 91, SD 92, Me 97, Re 100, St 93, Qu 101, Pr 101, In 87, Em 88.

Appearance: 40.

Skills: Amb 20, Acrobatics 40, Climb 70, Diplomacy 40, Leadership 80, S/ H 85, Strategy 50, Tactics 90, Track 60, Trickery 60, Tumbling 60, Wolf-riding 100.

PRINCIPAL ITEMS

+20 Scimitar of Man-slaying. Edged in black Lien, it strikes as a mithril weapon and does an extra slash critical.

+20 Chainmail. Made of mithril, coated with a special flat black enamel that renders it silent; it is non-encumbering.

+ 10 Shortbow. Double normal range, fires every round without penalty.

Arrows. Include 5 of Horse-slaying and 3 of Wolf and Dog-slaying. All rest are coated with a 5th level nerve poison.

+ 10 Helm. Halves the effects of head criticals; his shield is +10 and casts Blur three times per day; his arm and leg greaves are non-encumbering.

Special Powers (30 PPS)

MERP/RM: Umaug knows 5 open Essence lists to 5th level.

The Beggar-king of Tharbad

Sam Daish: 7/38 Cleveland Street, Brooklyn, Wellington, New Zealand (sdaish@voyager.co.nz)

As with most cities and large towns, Tharbad had a problem with beggars. Disease, war and worsening economic conditions force many to rely upon the generosity of people more fortunate than themselves. The large numbers of travelers, merchants and benevolent Dúnedain ensure that many who would otherwise starve on the streets or freeze to death in winter live to see another day. However, not all that receive the pity and charity of these generous people are so deserving. For some, begging is a profession, and at the top of this profession stands the Beggar-king.

History

The 4th century of the Third Age saw Arnor at the height of its prosperity. Rogues of all kinds lecided that it was easier to live off the generosity and gullibility of others than to work for a living. Among these were the first professional beggars. As the passing centuries brought economic decline to the North-kingdom, these beggars found that they had to become more sophisticated in their approach. The ability to appear sick or maimed, yet remain healthy, became a sort of underground art form. Other beggars specialized in appearing to be merchants or artisans who had been robbed. Each beggar would pass on his or her professional secrets to young apprentices in return for payment or service. These skillful beggars practiced their art all over the civilized lands of Arnor.

In Tharbad, this master-apprentice relationship gradually came to mirror the legitimate guilds of the city. Professional beggars operating in Tharbad were required to pay "dues" to their guildmaster. In return, the guildmaster would settle disputes over territory and provide a safe place to sleep, an encouraging environment in which to practice techniques and possible partners to work with. Although the heads of the beggars always styled themselves as paternal guildmasters, they used violence to enforce their edicts. The demise of a guildmaster was almost never a peaceful affair, and the succession was even less orderly. There were times when there was no guildmaster capable of enforcing his or her will, and other times when several guildmasters were in competition. This lack of stable control effectively stopped the guild from spreading beyond Tharbad, although some exceptional guildmasters occasionally broke this pattern.

The informal Guild of Beggars had an uneasy relationship with the slightly more organized Traders' Guild, the euphemistically-dubbed criminal element that was also growing up around this time. By and large, the activities of the two groups were different enough to prevent open hostility, but tension and distrust was common. Even the more aggressive guildmasters of the beggars did not encourage conflict with the traders, whose influence with street gangs could make life very difficult for the beggars. Occasionally individual beggars and traders would form partnerships, but these were uncommon and not encouraged.

The Great Plague saw professional begging hit an all time low. Many master beggars lost their lives and took their secrets with them. The fear of infection kept most people away from beggars, and the economic crisis meant that few had resources to share. Professional beggars found themselves begging in truth, along with hordes of other unfortunates.

The lands that were once Arnor will never fully recover from the Plague but, by the 1640s, some normalcy has returned. With the return of the steady flow of goods and people, the surviving beggars have also returned to their old trade. However, the old guild structure has not survived. The new master of Tharbad s beggars calls himself the Beggar-king, desiring to truly become lord of all he surveys, and beyond.

The Beggar-king

The Beggar-king is a man named Mogarn. His history is known to few, and Mogarn himself is slowly forgetting most of it as his use of *tartec* (an addictive euphoric drug) becomes greater.

Mogarn grew up on the back streets of Tharbad. At an early age he was apprenticed to a master beggar who recognized his talent. The young Mogarn learnt quickly, and soon became known for his skill and innocent looks. The Plague, however, hit just as Mogarn was coming into the full flower of his talent, and forced him into begging in earnest. Mogarn was lucky enough to be found and rescued by a kindly (and slightly mad) middle-aged woman by the name of Risa Loega.

Mogarn reminded Risa of her own son who had died early in the Plague, and gradually she came to believe that Mogarn was her son in truth. Mogarn, in turn, was very grateful to his savior, and soon came to think of her as his real mother (of whom he had only misty memories). Risa died in a late resurgence of the Plague, leaving Mogarn emotionally shattered and in possession of her estate (a run-down house in the low quarter of Tharbad), a few household possessions and a small amount of cash.

Mogarn knew no trade and so was soon doing odd laboring jobs and occasional begging. While out one day, he came across a pair of his old beggar associates, Fandal and Kiric, who were begging for real. Mogarn took them home with him, and soon they had got to talking about old times. Within a week, Mogarn, Fandal and Kiric had decided to re-establish the old beggar guild.

Using Mogarn's house as a base, they had soon rounded up their old associates, many of whom were happy just for a roof over their heads and regular meals. Mogarn's inheritance lasted long enough to support these beggars until they were confident and healthy enough to resume begging professionally. At first it was easy to attract beggars into the organization—a safe place to stay and a cooked meal were easily worth paying a small cut of their takings — but as conditions in Tharbad improved, beggars sought to return to a more independent lifestyle. Mogarn decided that such independence should not be allowed. After a few beatings from hired thugs, the beggars got the idea that it was safer to stay under Mogarn's "protection." Fandal and Kiric, who came to argue against these tactics, were later seen floating down the Gwathló, minus several limbs.

Mogarn's tactics attracted several young toughs to his side, and soon he effectively controlled all begging in Tharbad. As the organization became more profitable, Mogarn discovered just how much money could buy in Tharbad. Although not truly rich, Mogarn is wealthy enough to have developed addictions to *tartec*, alcohol, and cruelty (mostly in that order). Mogarn has lost his youthful energy and looks, getting more overweight and lazy by the day. His mind is still sharp, however, and when he puts his mind to it he can muster considerable charisma. Generally boisterous, he maintains a certain camaraderie with most of his subjects. (Most know that when he starts to speak softly and politely, it is time to start worrying.) Despite his considerable intelligence and organizational ability, Mogarn has always overrated himself. This has resulted in a susceptibility to flattery, and a tendency not to recognize when he is in over his head (as he is at present; see "Activities and Aims").

The Current Organization

The Beggar-kingdom survives not just from intimidation and violence (though this is often how it seems), but because it provides a valuable service to its subjects.

At the bottom of the organization are fifteen apprentice beggars. These are trainees who are not yet skillful enough to make a living through begging. They are trained by master beggars in one area of begging, based on the aptitude of the trainee. Apprentices have no say in the running of the organization, and are treated however the master beggars see fit.

Journeyman beggars are those who have graduated from apprenticeship. These beggars are by far the largest numerically (thirty-three at present; if all goes well, several will be promoted to master status), if not politically. Each journeyman is allowed to practice one type of begging (up to three types by special favor of the king), paying a fixed tax each year in accordance with that

type. Every journeyman beggar supposedly has access to the king but, in reality, such one-on-one meetings must come through luck or palm-greasing. They are granted food and board free of charge, and have the chance to train with and form partnerships with other beggars. Journeymen are usually allocated an area where they can work, and are protected from muggings and general harassment.

Fewest in number (but greatest in influence) are the six master beggars, those who show special talent for begging. Their duties include finding and training apprentices, collecting taxes and enforcing Mogarn's will. They themselves pay no tax, and are promised support in their old age. Master beggars have the ear of Mogarn and are often bribed to allow journeymen to see him. Master beggars may beg in any way they chose, and have freedom to associate with anyone (such as traders, adventurers or street gangs).

Certain master beggars have been given sanction and support to set up "fiefdoms" in other cities or regions. Mogarn is currently looking to put likely masters into Sudúri, Fornost and each of the Cardolanian principalities. These men will receive appropriate starting capital (cash and people) in return for a fixed yearly tax from the area. At present, Mogarn controls beggars in roughly the area controlled by Tharbad, and has agents in the process of securing Dol Caladir, Sudúri and Metraith.

ACTIVITIES AND AIMS

Not surprisingly, the main activity of the beggars is begging. Each beggar has permission to beg in certain ways. This can range from the highly respected tradesmen (who pretend to be traveling merchants or tradesmen — trained in the basic skills and knowledge of their alleged profession — who claim to have been robbed, seeking charily from their fellow professionals), to the lowly washers (who wear very little and beg for clothes which they then sell). Others are those who claim to have been maimed in war, recently attacked by brigands, suffering from various painful (but non-contagious) diseases, crippled by old age, destitute with babies to care for, etc. Each type of beggary has its own secrets and ploys for success.

Master beggars ensure that real beggars are kept out of the most profitable areas and that professional beggars are keeping to the rules. Thugs are hired if necessary, but normally beggars (real or professional) are controlled through threats. Occasionally, master beggars will agree to tail someone, sell information, practice pick pocketing or act as a watchman for traders, but this activity is not usual. In the case of apprentice or journeyman beggars, it is strictly outlawed.

Mogarn, however, has high ambitions beyond the scope of begging. He has been dealing with agents of Dagobert (the steward of Finduilas III, Ernileth of Dol Caladir (See Section 8.2.2 in *Arnor: The People* and Section 8.3 in *Arnor: The Land*.) These agents are actually from Finduilas herself, but she wishes it to appear as if Dagobert is acting without her knowledge. Finduilas' agents have instructed Mogarn to ferment as much anti-Gondorian feeling as possible among the lower classes.

Mogarn hopes that the more pressure that the *cánotar* and mayor experience, the less they will be able to harass beggars (which they do a lot in the mind of Mogarn). Funds have been promised to Mogarn where he can show proof of his success in causing unrest. Mogarn needs these funds to help expand his "kingdom" (and to fund his *tartec* habit). However, this plan could easily backfire on Mogarn were the *cánotar* to discover it. Until now the beggars have not even rated as a petty annoyance, but their involvement in this conspiracy might soon bring them to the *cánotar's* attention.

Mogarn would also like to see the Traders' Guild pay more respect to himself and his "kingdom." Though Mogarn probably won't intentionally annoy the traders enough to really upset them, he may do so by accident. Mogarn has been allowing his master beggars to practice more and more petty crime. This does not bother the traders, but if he foolishly engages in smuggling (perhaps to reduce the cost of his *tartec*) or any other very profitable activity, the traders will certainly take notice.

A SELECTION OF BEGGARS

DOGARTH

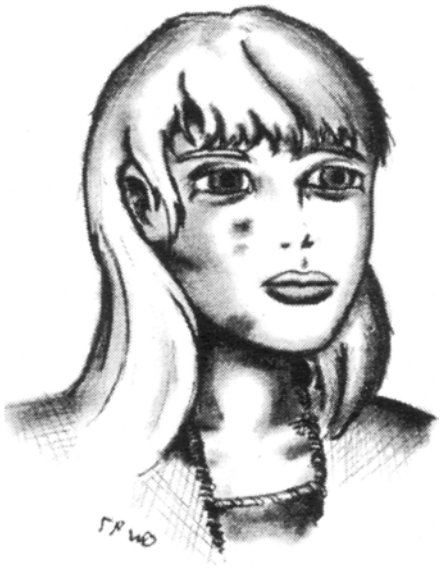
Dogarth has never begged a day in his life —he has stolen, mugged, murdered and blackmailed, but never begged. He is, however, a master beggar. Dogarth was at first hired by Mogarn on a casual basis but, as intimidation proved increasingly useful, he became a permanent employee.

Dogarth is not particularly big or intimidating in appearance, but has several friends who are, and he is very good at pointing them in the right direction. Few among the beggars are now deceived by his remarkably gentle smile. Dogarth knows he is neither very smart nor very charismatic, and this is his strength. Dogarth has taken a great deal of time and effort to uncover indiscretions on the part of many master and journeyman beggars, ranging from "treasonous" discussions to undeclared income to private practices that are best left in the dark. Dogarth reports some of these to Mogarn, but mostly he lets the individual know that he knows and leaves it at that. Dogarth gets considerable pleasure from seeing others squirm, and only rarely does he use the information in a definable way. This activity has made him many enemies, though none have acted against him so far.

Dogarth has no plans to usurp Mogarn (he knows he could not run the "kingdom" with much skill), and in his own way is very loyal. Dogarth grew up on the streets of Tharbad and knows he is fortunate to live as well as he does. He will go to great lengths to protect his comfortable lifestyle.

MELE

A young woman of mixed descent, Mele is in many ways a typical journeyman beggar. She works with two young children to beg for alms. She works hard at her job and takes very few risks. Her peasant family died in the Plague and she was forced to turn to prostitution. Often she was not paid and a few times viciously beaten (one such beating left her unable to bear children). One of her regulars was a master beggar, Grolim, who arranged for her to join the apprentices. Grolim now enjoys her favors exclusively, and Mele has progressed well within the beggar system. Though she longs to rid herself of Grolim's attentions, she does not wish to risk her career and life to do it.



Until recently, Mele had been paying for tuition from a minor scribe. She has learnt to read and write passably well and knows a little history. However, much to Mele's disappointment, the scribe recently canceled the classes for an unknown reason. (Actually, it was Grolim s doing: he discovered the tuition, became jealous and threatened the scribe. If Mele finds this out, she may well be angered enough to take some rash action.)

FINGLIN

Currently the highest earner of the journeyman beggars, Finglin is a young and (when not disguised as a scarred war cripple) handsome man of considerable charm. Finglin claims to be the illegitimate son of Aervellon, the Regent of Girithlin, and certainly bears some resemblance to him.

Finglin's high earnings are not all due to begging, however. Disregarding Mogarn's orders, Finglin often works with thieves and smugglers. He has so far managed to avoid raising even Dogarth's suspicions. Finglin is confident that he is on the way to becoming the youngest master beggar ever, and he may be right. He is, however, getting over confident and is starting to engage in the good life a little too much. Recently he ran up a large gambling debt, and only just managed to avoid serious injury. (He got a large payoff from a burglary job.) He has not learnt from the experience, and is starting to get into trouble again. If things get really bad, he might just try a plan that he has had for some time, which involves stealing Mogarn's treasury and fleeing Tharbad altogether.

GM NOTES

The Beggar-king of Tharbad is, in fact, based on a historical beggar-king in medieval France, the Grand Coesre. His organization spread throughout France, and apparently was very successful for some time.

GMs should remember that 99% of the beggar-kingdom s activity is begging. They are not thieves, muggers or informants (despite what you might read in Gary Gygax books). Most of the population of Tharbad and elsewhere have never even heard of the beggar-kingdom, and most that have do not believe that it exists. Certain officials are aware of it, but they mostly see it as a small-time operation or as a useful way of keeping beggar numbers under control.

Professional begging is illegal. For an otherwise healthy individual to make a living from begging is considered a confidence trick and/or theft, and will be prosecuted as such if the authorities can be bothered. Professional beggars have a reasonable standard of living. Their basic needs are taken care of by the king and, after paying their "taxes," the rest of what they earn is purely disposable income. A reasonably skilled beggar can earn around 2 silver pieces a week (all in small coinage, and before the king takes his cut). Sure as heck beats working for a living!

Player characters may encounter the beggar-kingdom in a number of ways. They may see a real beggar being beaten up by a master beggar, they may get upset if they spot a fake beggar, or they may have a variety of other street encounters. Alternatively, if the GM is running an intrigue campaign, the *cánotar* may ask them to investigate the beggars (if he believes they exist). PCs who are from the slums may well have a background that involves the beggars (maybe a friend of Mogarn's). PCs may come across Mogarn's *tartec* suppliers. The GM may decide that Mogarn begins to challenge the traders for control of certain profitable activities, resulting in a gang war. Or the GM may just like to know that the beggars are around if the need for them should arise, allowing PCs the odd glimpse of "something funny" going on.

A Dog's Life

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Setting:

Tharbad, any time after the division of Arnor and before the fall of Angmar (T.A.861-1975).

Requirements:

A small group that has contacts with the criminal element in Tharbad.

Task:

The player characters must try to stay alive and out of trouble while stealing valuable cargo. Dealing with the cargo itself will also be a problem.

Introduction

A pair of rogues, men from Dunfearan, have managed to abduct a litter of five royal wolfhound puppies from Mallach Tarmëa, a leading noble of Arthedain, and are trying to convey the puppies secretly to Sudúri. In Tharbad, however, the dog-nappers are attacked by agents of both Angmar and Arthedain, who also desire the puppies. In addition, a third group of rogues (the player characters) have heard about the "valuable cargo" that the Daen possess and have decided to rob them. How did all this come to be? Read on...

GM Note: *The long tale is included so that if the player characters want to get to the bottom of what happened the gamemaster doesn't have to do too much work. If the scenario works, the player characters should realize that they have just witnessed something big happen, though they may not be quite sure of its significance. This may leave them somewhat confused or frustrated. If the gamemaster feels this is a problem then s/he could ensure that Brulig or Comleag survive to tell the story.*

The Tale

Lanaigh Masoe, a near obsessive animal collector in Sudúri, has been dreaming for some time about possessing a *drogryn aran*, a royal wolfhound of Arthedain. All his attempts to purchase one of these prized animals have met with failure. Desperate to obtain such a rare and beautiful creature, Lanaigh went to the (for him) unprecedented step of hiring a pair of Daen adventurers, Brulig and Comleag. These promised to deliver the dog within the year for a princely sum of 3,000 silver pieces. Though this nearly bankrupted Lanaigh, he agreed. Planning to demand even more when they actually had the dog, Brulig and Comleag set off.

The pair went first to Cameth Brin to seek advice from Canlach, an old companion. Canlach told them that the dogs were often used by the king's rangers, and Brulig and Comleag decided that their best hope lay in kidnapping (or, rather, "dog-napping") one of the hounds while it was accompanying a ranger on patrol. Canlach recommended Nothva Rhaglaw as a good place to start looking, and (if they managed to capture one) promised to help the pair convey the dog to Tharbad. After several months of fruitless searching, Brulig and Comleag decided that they were never going to find a ranger, let alone one with a wolfhound. It was only as they started back to Cameth Brin in defeat that fate or luck played them a card.

After traveling in the rain and arguing all day, Brulig and Comleag began searching for a dry cave or something to spend the night in (after high winds had torn away their tent—which was all Comleag's fault for not setting it up right or Brulig's for not catching it as it flew away, depending on whose side you are on). As they wandered around in the twilight, the Daen heard sounds of fighting. Moving cautiously towards the sounds they discovered a lone swordsman holding off five Orcs. Grateful for something to vent their frustrations on, and sharing their race's usual disgust for Orcs, the pair entered the fray. One Orc managed a quick slash at Brulig's leg as it escaped, but apart from that the fight was brief and successful. The pair were slightly annoyed when they found that the swordsman was a Dúnadan, but were mollified when he invited them back to his campsite to see to Brulig's leg.

Despite Comleag's opinion that the leg would have to be amputated to prevent infection, the Dúnadan, who introduced himself as Braelen, soon had it cleaned and bound. But what caught the pair's real interest were the other inhabitants of the campsite: a badly wounded Dúnadan by the name of Mindirith, and a wolfhound with five pups.

The pair didn't fancy their chances against Braelen and the dog, so they decided to wait for an opportunity to sneak off with the puppies. Their chance came later that night. The Orc who had escaped had come back with ten of his friends and had tracked the Dúnadan to his campsite. In the brutal battle that followed Brulig and Comleag managed to make off with the pups, while Braelen and the mother were engaged with Orcs.

The pair ran all through the night and into the next day, almost without rest. After "acquiring" a couple of horses, they swiftly made their way to Cameth Brin. For suitable payment Canlach made travel arrangements with a discrete bargemaster to take the pair as far as Tharbad; from there they would have to make their own way to Sudúri. Despite their nightmares involving

vengeful Dúnedain, the Daen made it safely to Tharbad, where they rented a lodging house and hired a couple of thugs for security. Finding a bargemaster who was willing to go to Sudúri with no stops along the way proved relatively easy, and the pair were booked to leave in two days' time.

Seeing a chance to make more money, Ganlach waited a couple of days (assuming that this would give Brulig and Comleag, whom he rather liked, enough headstart) and then sold his story to an Angmarean agent. Canlach noticed that this agent seemed to get very excited at his mention that one of the puppies had seemed far more mature than the others. The agent recognized Canlach's description of the pup as a sign that it had been blessed by the Vala Oromë.

Such blessings only come to perhaps one in every fifty royal wolfhounds. Such a hound is known in Arthedain as a *∂rogryn golo∂hren*, a beast possessed of almost human intelligence, and usually becomes a companion to a member of the royal family or its favorites. (See Section 10.2.4 in ICE's *Arnor: The Land* for further background.) Because their special nature is due to a blessing of the Valar, these hounds are greatly valued by the Dúnedain.

The agent passed on Canlach's tale to two "black rangers" who happened to be staying in Cameth Brin. Realizing that the capture of these puppies (and the *golo∂hren* in particular) would look very good on their records, the rangers set off immediately.

Nor have Braelen, Mindirith, and Cirithor (the mother of the puppies) been idle, though the fight with the Orcs had left all three badly wounded and unable to match the speed of the dog-nappers. But Brulig and Comleag were unaware that Braelen is actually Mallach Tarmëa, Captain of the King's Rangers. Mallach had just finished a very long and delicate mission in Rhudaur—which he felt only he could achieve — but had come to realize that Cirithor was pregnant only after they had penetrated enemy territory. Unable to put the mission on hold, the Dúnadan had to hope that Cirithor would not give birth until they had returned to Arthedain. Unfortunately, the wolfhound gave birth on the way back, while Mallach and his fellow ranger were contending with a couple of unlooked for encounters with Orcs. But all three have since tracked the dog-nappers to Tharbad.

The Wolfhounds of Arthedain

It is said that during the early centuries of Númenor the Elves of Tol Eressëa would present each newborn scion of the royal household with a true blood *∂rogryn* pup. As the Númenóreans became estranged from Elven kind the hounds' special qualities became increasing diluted athrough breeding with other strains. Only in the houses of the Faithful was the blood kept relatively pure, though a birth of a *∂rogryn golo∂hren* was unheard of. As the Númenóreans became more imperialistic in attitude their hounds played an important part in the Forest Wars against the Eriadorians.

With the fall of Númenor only those hounds that accompanied the Faithful remained, and their blood had been much diluted over the centuries. These hounds were interbred with the hunting dogs of the Eriadorians and other domesticated breeds. The Arnorians kept hounds for hunting and personal security, but did not really make much use of them in a military sense.

With the rise of Angmar, Arthedain was put under severe pressure from wargs and war-wolves. The sheephounds and hunting dogs of the frontier proved unable to match the speed, power and intelligence of the wargs, and even the rangers could not prevent settlements from being terrorized. In T.A. 1285, an embassy of Lindon Elves arrived at the court of King Malvegil with fourteen pairs of hounds as a gift. These formed the core of a group of wolfhounds that came to surpass the wolves and wargs of Angmar. Paired with royal rangers these hounds were able to counter the waves of beasts from Angmar, and proved their worth in the Northern Wars.

About one in twenty of the wolfhounds is a *∂rogryn golo∂hren*. Some mysticism surrounds these hounds, which are said to be blessed by Oromë. Certainly they possess almost Mannish intelligence and sensibilities. Some say that when one looks deep into their eyes, a great hunt can be seen or occasionally a battle between a great hound and a huge wolf. When on leave, border troops tell of clear hunting horns sounding when these hounds go forth to counter wolf packs, though their officers smile when they hear this. Possibly the greatest advantage these hounds have is the intense training that they go through, which allows them to operate in a military fashion. Good diet, and very skilled and attentive keepers, also play a part.

Most members of the royal family keep a hound as a companion, and regard them more as friends than pets. Occasionally a noble is given a *∂rogryn aran* as a sign of special favor. These hounds add a little to the quality of the blood lines of the hounds from the noble houses. House Eketya has tried to form a unit similar to the royal hounds with some success.

The special nature of a *∂rogryn golo∂hren* becomes apparent a couple of weeks after birth. The discovery of one of these hounds is the cause of thanksgiving, and introspection. These hounds are a sign of the continued favor of the Valar, and many of the more morbid Arthedain note the increasing rarity of such births.

The Current Situation

All of Brulig's and Comleag's nightmares are about to come true: both royal and black rangers plan to retrieve the puppies tonight (though neither group is yet aware of the other's presence). In addition, one of the servants at the dog-nappers' lodging, one Faerdir, has overheard the two talking about the valuable cargo they possess. When the words "3,000 silver pieces" were mentioned, Faerdir made up his mind to try and get his hands on the goods himself. Faerdir will approach the player characters for help in stealing the goods. Alternatively, the player characters could be the thugs that Brulig and Comleag have hired.

Starting the Player Characters

The gamemaster must ensure that Faerdir has good reason to approach the group. The most likely reason would be some past association with them, or a mutual friend. Faerdir will explain the situation as he knows it. He can give an accurate floorplan of the house and usual location of Brulig, Comleag, and their two guards. Faerdir will be insistent that the robbery be conducted in such a way as to keep any suspicion from him. Initially Faerdir will ask for a 50/50 split between himself and the parry, but will go as low as even shares for everyone. Faerdir knows that Brulig and Comleag are planning to leave the next morning, so the party must act quickly.

THE TASK

The player characters must come up with a suitable plan for stealing the goods while keeping suspicion away from Faerdir (unless they want to frame him). During the robbery they will have to deal with two ranger parties, Brulig and Comleag, and their thugs.

THE NPCS

BRULIG AND COMLEAG

Brulig and Comleag have been having nightmares about vengeful rangers ever since they acquired the pups, expectant that trouble is imminent. The thugs they have hired are not brave, and may well run if serious danger threatens them. Brulig and Comleag have 3,000 silver pieces to think about, and consequently will have greater staying power (though both value their lives over anything else). A reasonably subtle plan (such as Faerdir drugging Brulig's and Comleag's food) would probably succeed since (being themselves armed robbers) they are more preoccupied with the possibility of violent seizure of their prize.

THE BLACK

RANGERS

Roener and Lem have had a couple of days to stake out the lodging house. Realizing that Brulig and Comleag are moving out soon, they have decided to capture the puppies tonight. Both rangers are equipped with enchanted rods that allow them to perform the spell *Long Door* once per day. With these short, black implements they will appear in a unoccupied part of the building. (If the gamemaster prefers them not to have the rods, they could quietly enter via the back door while dinner is being eaten.)

Their plan is to kill the dog-nappers, collect the puppies, and depart via the front door. After this they will go to a safehouse in the Thieves' Quarter and await suitable transportation back to Angmar.

The black rangers will happily kill everyone in their way, including the player characters. (Depending on how the gamemaster manages the conflict between Angmar and Cardolan, the rangers may also leave signs that Angmar was involved to show that no one is safe from the long arm of the Witch-king.) Deaths will cause the city watch to become heavily involved. (How this is handled is up to the gamemaster.)

THE ROYAL RANGERS

Mallach Tarmëa and Mindirith have only just found where Brulig and Comleag are hiding. They have decided to wait until Brulig and Comleag leave town before attempting to retrieve Cirithor's puppies. This is because they do not feel comfortable operating in a urban setting and they are aware that the King of Arthedain would not be happy about them conducting an unsanctioned foray in Tharbad. (Evidence of such action would be an embarrassment to Arthedain and would probably require monetary compensation, although the king might show lenience in consideration for the importance of safeguarding the wolfhounds.)

However, when Mallach Tarmëa and Mindirith realize that someone is attempting to rob the house (the black rangers or the player characters), they will move in to safeguard the puppies. Mallach knows that one of the pups is probably a *golodhren*, and so is all the more eager to retrieve it.

Mallach and Mindirith will try not to kill anyone (unless they recognize Roener and Lem to be black rangers). They will also try to keep their own identities a secret, though perceptive player characters might glimpse the rangers' famous *eresseleni*.

CIRITHOR AND THE PUPPIES

Though not herself a *drogryn golodhren*, Cirithor's cunning is above what is average for her race. This factor should not be forgotten by the gamemaster. She is torn between protecting her puppies and following the more circumspect plans of her master. If the puppies are harmed in any way, their mother will become a killing machine. Four of puppies are unaware of the danger they are in, but do miss their mother and are somewhat malnourished (Brulig and Comleag not knowing much about the feeding of young wolfhounds). The *gobdhren* is more aware that something is wrong and, if given the chance, will attempt to lead its siblings in an escape attempt.

ENCOUNTERS

If the player characters spot others taking an interest in the house, they may just sit back and watch the fireworks as the two ranger-parties clash; or they may be caught up in the middle of the conflict, with the rangers melting into the shadows as the city watch appears. If the player characters manage to retrieve the puppies, they must decide what to do with them. Depending on their moral disposition, player characters might keep them, try to return them to their rightful owners or even seek out a buyer (Angmar?). Of course, any reward they might get for returning the puppies would be higher in Fornost.

In my own game, the player characters didn't stake out the house, but confronted the black rangers inside. The rangers had already killed all the occupants and were about to leave. A fight ensued, with the king's rangers turning up in the middle. To make a long story short, the player characters were knocked unconscious in the fight and later found by the watch in a house containing six dead people (Brulig, Comleag, the thugs, and the black rangers). The player characters were cleared of the murders, but are now serving three years of hard labor for robbery and drugging food. They have little idea of what happened except that Faerdir got them involved and the 3,000 silver piece loot was a litter of puppies!

As a secondary adventure, I had another player assume the role of a city watch detective investigating the matter. He too has little idea of what happened, but is thinking of quitting the watch to go to Cameth Brin and Sudúri (the

origin and destination of two of the corpses) in a quest to learn the truth.

Rolemaster Statistics

BRULIG (5th level Rogue)

Hits 83 **Exhaustion Points** 64 **AT (DB)** 9(15) **Move Rate** 65

Melee OB 71 (Broadsword) **Missile OB** 44 (Throwing Club)

Skills: Climbing56, Observation45, Sprinting35, Stalk/Hide44/46.

Items: Low steel broadsword +5, 13cp, 4sp.

COMLEAG (6th level Rogue)

Hits 80 **Exhaustion Points** 60 **AT (DB)**

6(21) **Move Rate** 71 **Melee OB** 73 (Broadsword) **Missile OB** 58 (Throwing Club)

Skills: Climbing60, Gambling46, Observation48, Stalk/Hide51/61.

Items: Cloak +10 hide, deck of marked cards, 67bp, 15sp, lgp.

THUGS (3rd level Warriors) Hits 72 **Exhaustion Points** 64 **AT (DB)**10(34s) **Move Rate** 59

Melee OB 79 (Mace) **Missile OB** 48 (Throwing Dagger)

Skills: Observation20. Items: 12cp, 3bp (all the rest has been lost to Comleag).

BLACK RANGERS (9th level Rangers)

Hits 105 **Exhaustion Points** 70 **AT (DB)** 9(30) **Move Rate** 80

Melee OB 85 (Hand-axe) **Missile OB** 75 (Composite Bow)

Skills: 5 ranger lists to 9th, 34 PPs, Ambush54 (9 ranks), Climbing73, Observation65, Silent Kill45, Stalk/ Hide 76

Items: AT 9+10, hand-axe +10, cloak and boots +10 stalk/hide, 12sp, 5gp

MALLACH TARMEA (BRAELEN)

(23rd level Ranger)

Hits 145 **Exhaustion Points** 80 **AT (DB)** 13(75) **Move Rate** 90

Melee OB 145 (shortsword) **Missile OB** 135 (composite bow)

Skills: All ranger base lists to 20th and 3 open Channeling to 5th 207 PPs Climbing85, Observation90, Stalk/Hide 100

Items: Far too good to let player characters get their grubby hands on (See Section 8.1.3 of *Arnor: The People*.)

MINDIRITH (10th level Ranger)

Hits 95 **Exhaustion Points** 70 **AT (DB)** 5(60) **Move Rate** 80 **Melee OB** 105 (broadsword) **Missile OB** 95 (composite bow)

Skills: All Ranger lists to 10th and 3 open Channeling to 5th 40 PPs Climbing 76, Observation68, Stalk/Hide86.

Items: AT 5+10, broadsword +10, composite bow +5, cloak +30 stalk/hide, eresselen (star broach) +10 DB &RR's

CIRITHOR (Level 8)

Hits 180 **Exhaustion Points** 110 **AT (DB)** 4(60) **Move Rate** 80

Melee OB 90LBi or 60MC1 Use "L/I" crits.

Items: *Mitbril*-laced hide collar +10 DB & RRs. Special +10 OB & DB vs wolves and wargs.

The Peoples of Eriador in the Second Age

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As the majority of recorded history for Middle-earth in the First Age concentrates on the wars of Beleriand, so the majority of the anecdotes we have concerning the Second Age concentrates on events in Eriador. In the wake of the destruction of Beleriand there was an eastward migration of Elves, Dwarves, and Men. The inevitable clash of peoples came about largely as a result of Sauron's influence in Middle-earth, but even before open warfare broke out between the Elves and Sauron there were other conflicts and other areas where peoples mingled.

Eriador properly included all the lands between the Ered Luin and Hithaeglir, bounded on the north by the Ice Bay of Forochel (where in the First Age had been the great plain of Lothlann, patrolled by the Fëanorians' cavalry based on Mount Rerir) and the hills and mountains of Angmar (a name from the Third Age). The southern boundary of the region was the river Glanduin,[1] which flowed from the Hithaeglir toward the Gwathló, and the boundary ran southwest from the confluence of the two rivers to Belegaer. The total land area probably comprised more than 200,000 square miles.[2] The region was originally thickly forested, but there were wide open spaces enough to allow the pasturing of flocks and herds.[3]

The earliest peoples to live in Eriador were the Eldar, who passed through it on their way to the Sea. Many years later both Dwarves and Nandor filtered into the land. The Dwarves of Nogrod and Belegost maintained contacts with their kindred in the east, and apparently also traded with the Nandor and Avari wherever they encountered them.[4] When Men started moving into Eriador, the Dwarves of Ered Luin also traded with them.[5]

By the end of the First Age many of the upheavals in Beleriand had had an effect on Eriador. Sindarin Elves had fled the wars in the west to settle in the northwestern portions of Eriador, mostly about the Lhûn and Nenuial.[6]

In "The History of Galadriel and Celeborn," in the essay "Concerning Galadriel and Celeborn," Tolkien writes that they settled near Lake Nenuial with many Sindar and Laegrim (Green-elves of Ossiriand), but mentions there were already many Nandor living in Eriador (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 234). Some of the Edain, too, had returned to Eriador in two or three groups, settling among those of their kin who had not crossed the mountains.[7]

In several places Tolkien indicates some of the Edain had actually stayed in Eriador. This would mean that those who fled Beleriand were probably absorbed by the Edain in the eastern lands, although Bereg's group may have ended up settling in an entirely different region. And many of the Easterlings who had served Morgoth also apparently returned to Eriador,[8] but they may have fled even further east out of fear or respect for the Elves.

The ethnography of Eriador changed throughout the Second Age. Who came, who stayed, and who left is not always clear. But we can arbitrarily divide the chronology of the Second Age into periods when the peoples of Eriador were relatively stable and when there were significant migrations or periods of instability:

1—50 The Migration Years
50 — 600 The Early Lindon Years
600 - 1000 The Expansion Years
1000 - 1500 The Years of Isolation
1500 - 1701 The Years of the Rings
1701 - 2251 The Black Years: Days of Flight
2251 - 3261 The Years of Conflict
3261 - 3319 The Respite Years
3320 - 5441 The Arnorian Years

The Migration Years (S.A. 1-50):

This was the period which most determined the makeup of Eriador for the first half of the Second Age. The Eldar and the Edain shared Beleriand (Lindon) for a few years, but in S.A. 32 the Edain set sail for their new home on the isle of Elenna. Soon after the departure of the Edain, the Eldar and Dwarves began moving eastward. Belegost, the ancient northern city of the Ered Luin, was abandoned and its people made the long trek to Khazad-dûm, which in that time required that they cross the Hithaeglir and journey south through the Vales of Anduin to Azanulbizar.[5]

There were, however, at least two groups of Elves and two groups of Men already living in Eriador during this period. The Elves were mostly Nandor, but some of the Sindar who had lived in Dorthonion and Hithlum, and near Himring, had some 135 years before fled Beleriand (after the Dagor Bragollach) and settled in the lands east of the Ered Luin.[10] From the mountains to the Baranduin and the Hills of Evendim (by lake Nenuial) was Elvish country.[11] The Nandor were related to the Laegrim. As there is no mention of towns or cities among these Elves, they may have lived a woodland life, hunting and gathering the fruits of the forest, wandering through the land.[12]

Although the Edain had entered Beleriand 300 years earlier, not all seem to have left Eriador, and in fact at least two groups fled the wars in the west to return to Eriador. These were Edain of the First and Third Houses (Bëorians and Marachians).[13] Their homelands in the east appear to have been the North Downs and the South Downs, and all the lands in-between. The small group of hills known as Tyrn Gorthad, the western-most rim of the South Downs (and later known as the Barrow-downs) also appear to have housed Edainic peoples.[14] The Weather Hills marked the easternmost boundary of the lands of the Edain in Eriador.

These Men had not had contact with their western kin for more than 150 years when the Edain of Beleriand set sail into the west.[15] In Eriador the Edain grazed their flocks on the hills, and perhaps herded cattle as well.[16] However, as the Edain of Beleriand had remained in friendship with the Elves, so the Edain of Eriador did, too. They occasionally visited the Elvish lands beyond the Baranduin, although they seem not to have established contact with Lindon and Mithlond until sometime after this period.[17]

The Swarthy Men, from whom had come the peoples of Bór and Ulfang, also continued to live in northern Eriador.[18] They apparently were the Forodwaith, some of whom had undoubtedly served Morgoth. But a few clans seem to have stayed out of the wars entirely, and these dwelt north of the Elvish and Edainic lands. From them may have come the Lossoth who in the Third Age gave aid to Arvedui in his last winter. It is conceivable that some of the Swarthy Men settled near the Mountains of Angmar and in the lands between the Hithaeglir and the domain of the Edainic peoples. Although other Men may already have dwelt there, the Forodwaith may have been the ancestors of the Men of Angmar and the hill tribes of Rhudaur in the Third Age.

Culturally the Edain of Eriador must have been similar to the Dúnedain before they left Beleriand. The Dúnedain (in Beleriand) had built homesteads in the woods and hills, stockades in times of need, and generally were a wood-using rather than stone-using people. The possible exception would have been the Marachians of Hithlum, who dwelt amid the Noldor, who themselves built with stone. But the Marachians and Bëorians who returned to Eriador in the First Age had come from Estolad, not Hithlum (or Ladros, the region in Dorthonion which had been given to the Bëorians).

The Swarthy Men seem to have adopted the customs of their slaves in Beleriand, taking over their estates and homesteads. But we cannot know whether they came from an inferior culture in the east. Yet, it seems that until the Dúnedain returned to Middle-earth most Men lived in primitive societies. So perhaps the eastern clans who became the Forodwaith were more primitive than the Edain and must have had no large communities throughout the Second Age.

The Early Lindon Years (S.A. 50-600):

In this time Gil-galad and other Eldarin lords turned their attention to the east. The Sindar began migrating east.[19]

Since Sauron began building the Barad-dûr in S.A. 1000, the migration of the Sindar could have occurred at almost any time, but "The Tale of Years" continues with: "Later some of the Noldor went to Eregion..." Now, we know that Eregion was settled at the earliest in S.A. 700 (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 235) but no later than S.A. 750. So, the Sindarin migration must have occurred before 700. This work infers a gradual or multi-step migration; i.e., the Sindar at first settled in Eriador, but when the Noldor started moving east some of the Sindar then left Eriador altogether. Other interpretations are possible. Although Círdan's Falathrim were at ease with the Noldor, the Eglath of Doriath seem to have generally disliked

the Noldor, blaming them for the destruction of Beleriand and particularly for the ruin of Doriath and Arvernien (though only a few of the Noldor had had any part in those misdeeds).[20]

We know only that Celeborn ruled the Sindar in Harlindon during the early years. However, Sindarin (Doriathian) influence in Eriador must have gradually increased as more Elves passed eastward. Perhaps Celeborn himself led the expansion of Beleriandic culture into Eriador. But eventually it was Gil-galad, High King of the Elves of the West, whose authority was recognized through the Elvish lands between Baranduin and the Sea. This extension of *Gil-galad's* authority may be one of two reasons why princes like Oropher and Amdír led some of their people east.

Since word eventually reached the Noldor in Lindon about the discovery of *mithril* in Khazad-dum, it seems that during this period they maintained their friendship with the Dwarves, even though most of the Dwarves in Ered Luin after the Migration Years were descended from the Dwarves of Nogrod.[21] It was the Host of Nogrod which had sacked Menegroth, and the Dwarves of that city had slain Thingol. Nogrod's dwarves may have relocated in the region of the Ered Luin which bordered Harlindon, and this may be the second reason why the Sindar undertook their migrations into the East.[22]

Appendix A to *The Lord of the Rings* says: "....Dwarves dwelt, and still dwell, in the east side of the Blue Mountains, especially in those parts south of the Gulf of Lhûn, where they have mines that are still in use" (*The Return of the King*, p. 319).

Belegost was said to have been built on the northern side of Mount Dolmed, which was near the center of the Ered Luin (*The Silmarillion*, p. 91). If Mount Dolmed was in fact about even with Lake Nenuial, then probably the Dwarves of Nogrod migrated southward after their city was destroyed, establishing new mines near Harlindon. It seems that some traffic between the Noldor and Dwarves continued from the beginning of the age, and that the Dwarves who remained in Ered Luin communicated (probably traded with) the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm.

THE EXPANSION YEARS (S.A. 600 -1000):

These years differ from the Migration Years in that the ultimate destinations of the peoples who moved existed within Eriador, rather than outside of it. The Noldor (and some Sindar) passed eastward to establish Eregion. The Dwarves of Khazad-dûm extended their realm west through the mountains so they could trade with Eregion. The Dúnedain returned to Middle-earth during these years, not yet to stay but simply to visit. But Aldarion and his Venturers' Guild built a haven at the mouth of the Gwathló, and they established forts along the river.[23] Eventually, a small port was established near Eregion itself at the later site of Tharbad.[24]

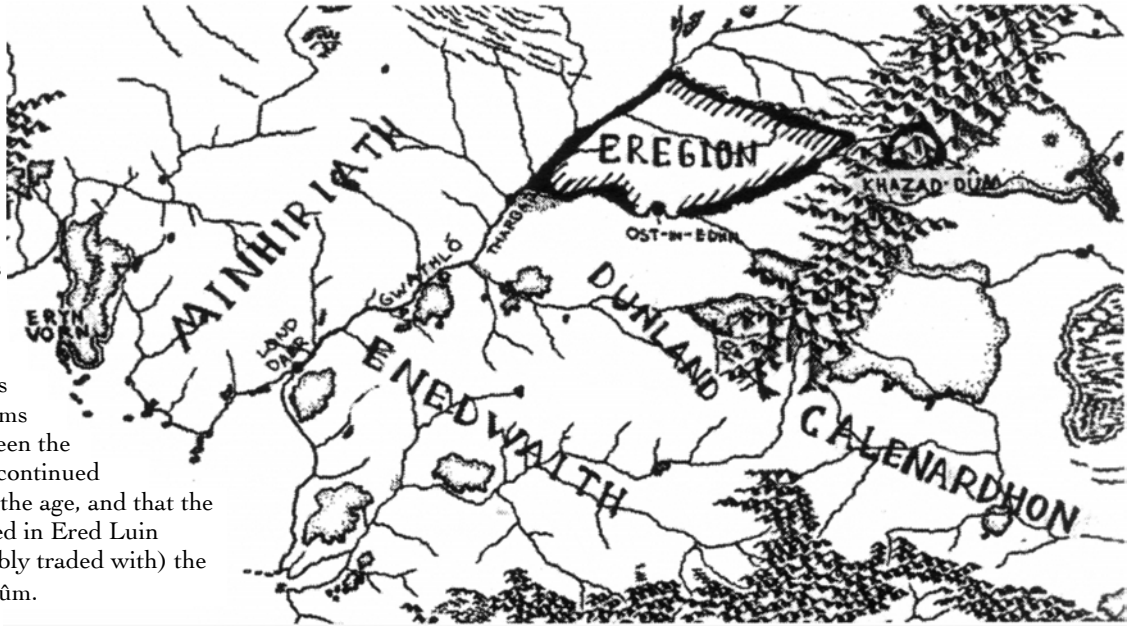
It was interest in *mithril* which led the Noldor to Eregion, but they built their city of Ost-in-Edhil and other dwellings there, and they established a guild of jewel-smiths (the Gwaith-i-Mírdain). The Dúnedain were interested in *mithril*, too, but they also harvested the forests for timber, which was used to build ships or taken back to Númenor. And during these years two kindreds of Men drifted north into Enedwaith and Minhiriath, the southern region of Eriador.

The Drúedain of Eriador were akin to those who had lived in Beleriand and Númenor, and may in fact have been reinforced by them as the western Drúedain abandoned Númenor. These dwelt mostly in the coastal lands.[25] The Dunlendings had pushed their way north, settling in many lands.[26]

If we accept this tradition as correct, then the arrival of the Eldar began a series of migrations which had an impact on all of Eriador and Gondor's history. The "fisher-folk" pushed into the mountains, displacing the Drúedain, who appear to have spread east and west. From the mountains the new Men spread into Calenardhon, Enedwaith, and Minhiriath.

Eventually, groups settled in the Cape of Eryn Vorn, the Bree land in the middle of Eriador (where previously the Edain had dwelt), Dunland in the east of Enedwaith, and in regions that later became part of Gondor.

Although he leaves in doubt the origin of these Men, Tolkien does confirm the rest of their history as mentioned in *Unfinished Tales* in Appendix F of The *Lord of the Rings*: "....Alien, too, or only remotely akin, was the language of the Dunlendings. These were a remnant of the peoples that had dwelt in the vales of the White Mountains in ages past. The Dead Men of Dunharrow were of their kin. But in the Dark Years others had removed to the southern dales of the Misty Mountains; and thence some had passed into the empty lands as far north as the Barrow-downs. From them came the Men of Bree...." (The Return of the King, pp. 407-8). They feared the Elves, however, and did not traffic with Eregion or Gil-galad's domains. At first they did engage in friendly exchanges with the Dúnedain, who taught them the use of iron among other skills.[27] But these were a primitive, forest-dwelling people who were appalled at the great destruction of the woods, and in time they began raiding the Dúnadan forts.[28]



The Years of Isolation (S.A. 1000 -1500):

After Tar-Aldarion's death in S.A. 1075 the Dúnedain took less interest in Middle-earth (largely because his daughter, Tar-Ancalimë, had no interest in it).[29] The Dúnedain undoubtedly continued to visit Lindon and Eregion, but were not led by a great lord with an active interest in such ventures as Aldarion had been.

Sauron's activity in Middle-earth became more ominous. He established himself in Mordor and began to work against the Eldar by trying to seduce them. His success in Eregion despite Gil-galad's attempts to oppose Sauron implies that Celebrimbor chose not to adhere to all of Gil-galad's policies. Hence, these years represent a time of division, however slight, among the Eldar.

The Years of the Rings (S.A. 1500-1701):

Once the Gwaith-i-Mírdain started forging the Rings of Power, they must have caused quite a stir among the Elven lords even though the Rings themselves appear not to have been matters of common knowledge (even the Dúnedain seem not to have known about the Rings at this time).[30] The prospect of being able to extend the Eldar's joy in Middle-earth through the Rings—to delay the "world-weariness" that was inevitable for every Elf—would have done much to restore the ancient friendships between the Elven kindreds. But that plan never reached fruition.

Within 10 years of the creation of the three greatest Rings of Power, Sauron forged the One Ring in Orodruin, and the Elves knew they would soon be embroiled in another war.[31] The Dúnedain, though ignorant of its causes, did not just show up at the last minute once the war had begun. They established a haven in Lindon where they built up troops and supplies over a period of years. And they maintained, perhaps even strengthened, their forts on the Gwathló from Lond Daer to Tharbad.

On the other hand Sauron was able to use the Dunlendings to harass the Dúnedain.[32] It may be even that the Edainic peoples of central Eriador, by now quite an ancient culture, were drawn into the preliminary conflicts. At the very least when Sauron invaded Eriador he overran all their lands as well as Eregion. Although Sauron was aided by the Dunlendings, some of them may have come to regret giving such aid once Sauron burned all the ancient forests away. It could be that the group who became the Men of Bree settled in that region (Tyrn Gorthad) shortly after the War of the Elves and Sauron.

The Black Years (S.A. 1701-2251):

These may have been the days of flight for more than just the Elves. Since Eriador was laid waste during the war, the Edainic peoples were either destroyed or driven off.[33] Elrond gathered many Men and Elves when he fled north with the remnants of his army and the survivors of Eregion. Thus, it is possible that the Edain left Eriador at this time, migrating eastward to settle in the Vales of Anduin, where other Elvish peoples dwelt, but also far removed from the devastations of Sauron's war.[34]

Although Khazad-dûm's western gate was closed, Gil-galad seems to have maintained contact with the Dwarves.[35] Elrond's establishment of Imladris indicates the Elves retained an interest in Eriador, but their lands between the Lhûn and Baranduin had been overrun during the war. It's unlikely this region ever fully recovered from that disaster, as many centuries later Gil-galad ceded it to Elendil and the Dúnedain for the establishment of Arnor.

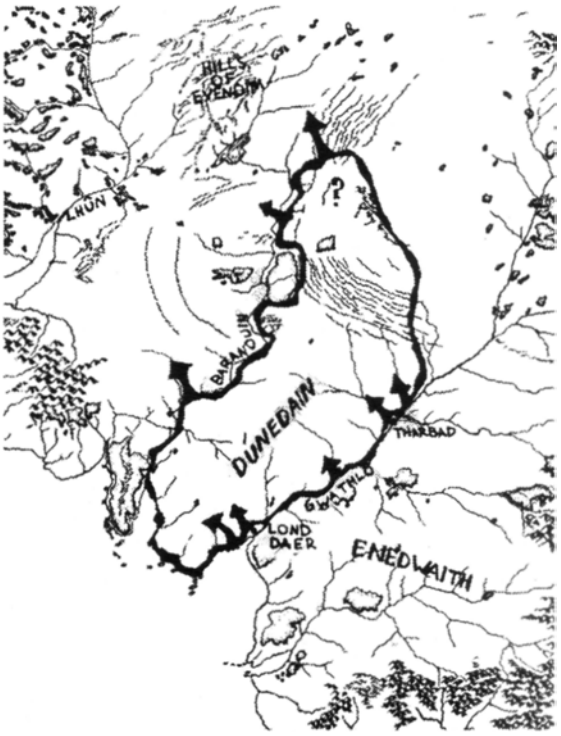
Thus, most of Eriador must have been a wasteland through these years. The ancient forests never grew back, but the lands recovered to some extent from Sauron's scorched earth policies. The Dunlendings who lived north of the Gwathló withdrew into the few remaining forests (like Eryn Vorn and the woods of the Bree-land), but there may have been a mixed people, partly of Edainic blood, partly of Dunlending blood, who lived throughout Minhiriath and other parts of Eriador, and who eventually were absorbed into Elendil's realm.

The Years of Conflict (S.A. 2251 -3261):

Although no further wars occurred in Eriador, Sauron continued to harass the Elves throughout the rest of the age.[36] The conflicts, however, gradually shifted from the Elves to the Dúnedain, who began establishing permanent fortresses and cities in Middle-earth soon after the War of the Elves and Sauron. The Nazgûl first appeared during this time, and the Númenóreans became a divided people. Gradually, more and more of the Faithful Númenóreans settled in north-western Middle-earth, close to the Eldar of Edhellond and Lindon.

Although Pelargir became the greatest haven of the Faithful, many Dúnedain must also have settled in Eriador, spreading north from Lond Daer and Tharbad into Minhiriath and the lands of the downs where the Edainic peoples had lived previously. It may be that some Dúnedain also settled north and west of the Baranduin and in the hills of Evendim during these years.

It was also during these years that the Drúedain left Númenor, fearful of the shadow which had fallen upon the Dúnedain.[37] They appear to have settled along the coasts of Middle-earth from Andrast to the Gwathló. They did not get along with the Dunlendings and their kin. Thus, it may be there were small conflicts in Calenardhon, Enedwaith, and Eriador between the Dunlendings and the other peoples.



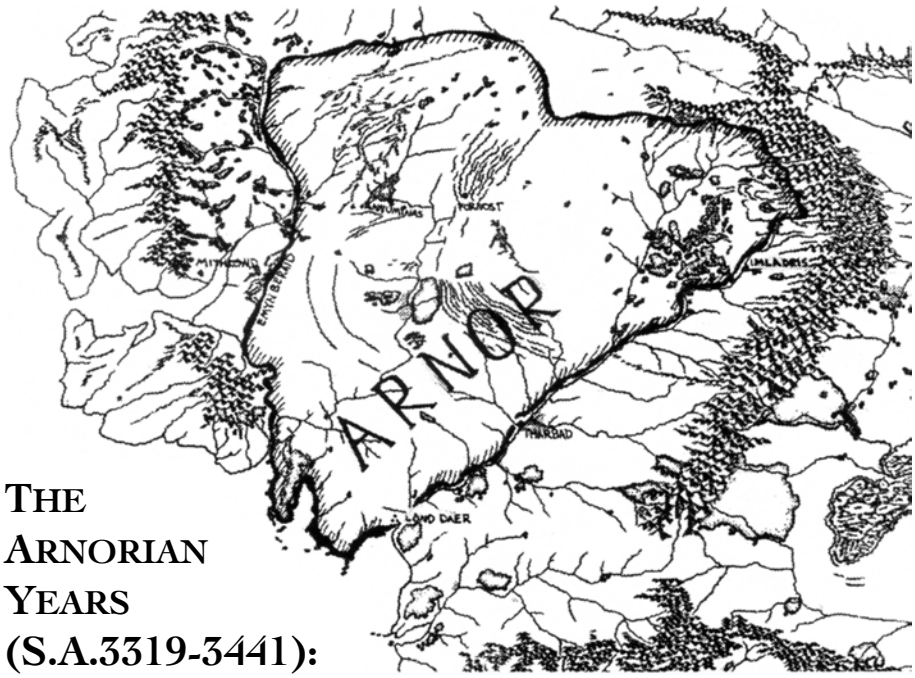
The Breefolk of the Third Age lived in stone houses, built fences, and engaged in some commerce, but these activities may all have been developed under Dúnadan rule. In the Second Age the Dunlendings and their kin must have been forced to make a gradual transition from forest-dwellers to farmers, fishers, and raiders. Their villages would be scattered far and wide, but must have been numerous and large enough to warrant the maintenance of the ancient forts on the Gwathló.

THE RESPITE YEARS (S.A. 3261-3319):

These were the years of Sauron's internment in Númenor. While he seduced the greater part of the Dúnedain to his cause many of the Faithful sailed to Middle-earth, and some undoubtedly settled in Eriador as well as in or near Pelargir.[38] But these were also the years in which Gil-galad extended his power deep into Middle-earth. Eriador's conflicts, however small and sporadic, must have ceased in this time. The Eldar began to re-establish links among the Elven realms so that Gil-galad's authority and military strength extended beyond Eriador.[39]

Since Elendil was able to establish a large kingdom soon after the destruction of Númenor, this peaceful phase must have seen a growth in Eriador's population. The Dúnedain may have been actively colonizing the former Elvish lands east of the Lhûn even during these years, and other Men would be settling quietly throughout Minhiriath.

The prospect of increased commerce could not have gone unnoticed by the Dwarves. Even if the Dwarves of Ered Luin were too few to take advantage of the renewal of civilization in Eriador the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm had the numbers and the historical interests for doing so.



THE ARNORIAN YEARS (S.A.3319-3441):

The last phase of Eriador's history in the Second Age was ushered in with the arrival of Elendil's four ships in Mithlond. Gil-galad built the three towers of Emyn Beraid for his friend but the Númenórean Dúnedain must have quickly contacted the Dúnedain of Eriador, or perhaps hearing that a descendant of Elros had survived the wreck of their homeland the Dúnedain living there asked Elendil to be their king.

In any event, new cities arose at Annúminas and Fornost, and the kingdom of Arnor spread out across the region. Although no mention is made of Elves continuing to dwell in the lands that became Arnor, the Wandering Companies must have continued to pass through the lands they had known for thousands of years. Arnor must have seemed quite the melting pot for more than a hundred years: Elves, Dúnedain, Dunlendings, Dwarves, and perhaps other Men of mixed stock, or of the ancient Edainic and Forodwaith clans all dwelt under the crowns of Elendil and Gil-galad.

Although much traffic had passed through Eriador for thousands of years, the Númenóreans were credited with building the great highways which ran from Lindon to Imladris, and from Fornost to Tharbad.[40] They also built many towers throughout the land, which work required stone from appropriate quarries. The Gwathló was used as a highway as well, for it was thought that the fastest route from Gondor to Arnor (at least when the kingdoms were first established) was to sail north to the Gwathló and then up to Tharbad, and then the reverse.[41] The ancient harbor at Lond Daer was abandoned by this time, perhaps destroyed by the great cataclysm which sank Númenor beneath the waves forever.[42]

Tharbad itself must have become prominent in the wake of Lond Daer's destruction (or deterioration). It was actually two cities, with garrisons maintained on both sides of the river, one from each kingdom.[43] Serving also as Elendil's chief port and being close to Khazad-dûm, the city may have enjoyed a rich and interesting culture for many years into the Third Age.

FOOTNOTES

1. In fact, "Glanduin" means "border river" and it was recognized as the southern boundary of Eregion (*Unfinished Tales,* p. 441).
2. Karen Wynn Fonstad estimates the total area of Arnor was 245,847 square miles *(The Atlas of Middle-earth, Revised Edition,* p. 191). However, the revised map of Middle-earth published by Christopher Tolkien with the "final" edition of *The Lord of the Rings* implies a smaller area.
3. In the commentary he provides on "Aldarion and Erendis," Christopher Tolkien notes that Ancalimë's lover "sang to her songs that came out of far-off days, when the Edain pastured their flocks in Eriador long ago, before ever they met the Eldar" *(Unfinished Tales,* p. 209).
4. Many references support this in the unpublished works which have appeared in *The History Of Middle-earth.* However, only the chapter "Of the Sindar" in *The Silmarillion* seems to

represent any final form of substantiation for such early linkages between Beleriand's peoples and the peoples of Eriador or more distant lands.

5. The Edain appear to have had dealings - with the Dwarves in Eriador, not always friendly, because Androg, one of Túrin's outlaws, says to Mîm the Petty-dwarf: "'...For Androg does not like Dwarves. His people brought few good tales of that race out of the East.'" (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 97).
6. "Thus ended the Siege of Angband....The most part of the Grey-elves fled south and forsook the northern war....and some fled the land and hid themselves in Ossiriand, or passing the mountains wandered homeless in the wild...." (*The Silmarillion*, p. 151).
7. The Edain dwelling in Estolad (Bëorians and Marachians, the First and Third Houses of the Edain) held a great council in which they debated the merits of staying in Beleriand. Afterwards, Amlach, a grandson of Marach, came back to find he had been impersonated: ."..Many therefore of those that yet remained in Estolad made ready to depart; and Bereg [a grandson of Bëor] led a thousand of the people of Bëor away southwards, and they passed out of the songs of those days. But Amlach repented, saying: 'I have now a quarrel of my own with this Master of Lies, which will last to my life's end,'....But those of his people who were of like mind with Bereg chose a new leader, and they went back over the mountains into Eriador, and are forgotten" (*The Silmarillion*, p. 145). Earlier it is written: "But many men remained in Estolad, and there was still a mingled people living there long years after, until in the ruin of Beleriand they were overwhelmed or fled back into the East" (*ibid.*, p. 144). The "ruin of Beleriand" occurred after the Dagor Bragollach in F.A. 455.
8. "..And after the victory of the Lords of the West those of the evil Men who were not destroyed fled back east, where many of their race were still wandering in the unharvested lands, wild and lawless, refusing alike the summons of the Valar and of Morgoth" (*The Silmarillion*, p. 259).
9. The West-gate of Moria (Khazad-dûm) was not built until Eregion was founded. Hence, the only entrance to Khazad-dûm was on the eastern side of the mountains. Although there was the Redhorn Pass and at least one other close by, traffic seems to have been more northerly. The ancient Dwarf Road of Rhovanion ran to the High Pass above Imladris.
10. Cf. note 6 above. It may be erroneous to suggest that any of the Sindar were still recognizably Sindar.
11. In relating the first meeting of the Dúnedain with the Edain of Eriador, Christopher Tolkien writes: ."..Elsewhere in this essay it is explained that these Men dwelt about Lake Evendim, in the North Downs and Weather Hills, and in the lands between as far as the Brandywine, west of which they often wandered though they did not dwell there" (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 214).
12. In *The Fellowship of the Ring* we are given a rare sight of how the Elves might have lived in ancient Eriador in the chapter "Three's Company," when Frodo, Sam, and Pippin are given a night's shelter by Gildor Inglorion's company. However, his folk were Noldor and they mentioned having halls in a more distant region (probably close to Imladris, according to *The Road Goes Ever On*, p. 66). Except for the Elvenking's feasts in *The Hobbit*, Tolkien does not reveal how the woodland Elves lived in any region, and Thranduil actually dwelt in an underground cavern city.
13. In a continuation of his commentary cited in note 11 above, Christopher Tolkien writes: ."..It appears that they were in origin Men of the same stock as the Peoples of Bëor and Hador who had not crossed the Blue Mountains into Beleriand during the First Age" (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 214). The essay referred to does not necessarily conflict with the accounts in *The Silmarillion* if we assume the refugees from Beleriand were absorbed into existing populations.
14. I include the South Downs because Tolkien included the following passage in the history of Arnor: "'It is said that the mounds of Tyrn Gorthad, as the Barrowdowns were called of old, are very ancient, and that many were built in the days of the old world of the First Age by the forefathers of the Edain, before they crossed the Blue Mountains into Beleriand...'" (The Return of the King, p. 321). Tyrn Gorthad was separated from the South Downs by the defile named "andrath" (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 348).
15. The First Age lasted 590 years, and the last group of Edain to flee Beleriand did so in the year 455. Thus, from F.A. 455 to S.A. 32 was 167 years. On the length of the First Age see *The War of the Jewels*, p. 346.
16. "..For it was this Brodda who had seized the people, the goods, and the cattle of Húrin's homelands..." (Unfinished Tales, p. 69). Tolkien does not indicate where or when the Edain began herding cattle, but if they were herding sheep in Eriador then they may also have herded cattle. Since the shepherds of Númenor seem to have come largely from the Bëorians, it may be that the flocks of Eriador were Bëorian flocks, rather than Marachian flocks.
17. Cf. notes 11 and 13 above. It would be strange for the Edain of Eriador to have established contact with the Eldar of Lindon soon after the departure of the Dúnedain and to have heard nothing of their sailing. Hence, it must be that the renewal of friendship between Eldar and Edain in Middle-earth was at least one or two generations after S.A. 32, but perhaps before S.A. 100.
18. "It was after thought that the people of Ulfang were already secretly in the service of Morgoth ere they came to Beleriand. Not so the people of Bór, who were worthy folk and tillers of the earth. Of them, it is said, came the most ancient of the Men that dwelt in the north of Eriador in the Second Age and [? read in] after-days" (*The War of the Jewels*, p. 61).
19. This is based upon "The History of Galadriel and Celeborn" in *Unfinished Tales*, which implies an early migration. The Appendix in *The Lord of the Rings* says only "in the beginning of [the Second Age] many of the High Elves still remained. Most of these dwelt in Lindon west of the Ered Luin; but before the building of the Barad-dur many of the Sindar passed eastward, and some established realms in the forests far away..." (*The Return of the King*, p. 363).
20. *Unfinished Tales*, p. 258. Of course, this passage is at a slight variance with that given on pp. 280-1. Yet Celeborn was mistrustful toward Dwarves, as Oropher was said to be. Since he was married to Galadriel, Celeborn may have been much less judgmental of the Noldor in general. Also, one of the traditions for the founding of Edhellond suggests that Sindar of Doriath, wishing to get away from the Noldor, established the southern haven (*ibid.*, p. 247).
21. In the essay "Concerning Galadriel and Celeborn" Tolkien writes "There were and always remained some Dwarves on the eastern side of Ered Lindon, where the very ancient mansions of Nogrod and Belegost had been — not far from Nenuial; but they had transferred most of their strength to Khazad-dûm....The Dwarves of Belegost were filled with dismay at the [sack of Menegroth] and fear for its outcome, and this hastened their departure eastwards to Khazad-dum" (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 235).
22. Of course, placing Nogrod and Belegost on the maps which show

Eriador is not easy. Karen Wynn Fonstad's maps of Beleriand and Eriador indicate that Belegost was located in the southern Ered Luin near Harlindon, but this placement contradicts Tolkien's own writings and is puzzling.

23. Tolkien does not say when the forts were built, but they seem to be derived from the ongoing conflicts between the Númenóreans and the Dunlendings who lived in Enedwaith and Minhiriath. The clearest mention of these forts is made in Appendix D to "The History of Galadriel and Celeborn," titled "The Port of Lond Daer," in *Unfinished Tales*), p. 263.
24. *Ibid*. ."..But later they penetrated northward [up the Gwath-hir > Gwathló] as far as the beginning of the great fenlands; though it was still long before they had the need or sufficient men to undertake the great works of drainage and dyke-building that made a great port on the site where Tharbad stood in the days of the Two Kingdoms."
25. Some of the commentary in "The Battles of the Fords of Isen" identifies the barbarous fisher-folk mentioned in "The Port of Lond Daer" with Drúedain. These peoples lived along the coast of Enedwaith rather than in Eriador. Probably those who left Númenor were taken to Lond Daer rather than Pelargir or other havens on the coasts. Cf. *Unfinished Tales*, pp. 262, 370, 377-87.
26. It may be more appropriate to refer to them as the Men of Ered Nimrais than Dunlendings, but even this appellation fails to convey the immense breadth of their dispersal and history. The earliest mention of a race of Men who might be the forefathers of the barbarians who fought with the Númenóreans are a small tribe of fisher-folk displaced by the Elves who founded Edhellond (in one of the traditions concerning that haven). They are said to have fled north to the mountains (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 247).
27. "Akallabêth" states that the Númenóreans taught the Men of Middle-earth to till the lands, but in "A Description of Númenor" Tolkien writes: "It was indeed their grievance, when the Shadow crept along the coasts and men whom they had befriended became afraid or hostile, that iron was used against them by those to whom they had revealed it" (*Unfinished Tales*, pp. 170-1).
28. Cf. "The Port of Lond Daer" in *Unfinished Tales*, pp. 261-5.
29. "After Aldarion's death she neglected all his policies, and gave no further aid to Gil-galad" (*ibid*., p. 220).
30. In 1958 Tolkien mentioned in a letter to Rhona Beare the secrecy surrounding the Rings of Power: ."..(I do not think Ar-Pharazôn knew anything about the One Ring. The Elves kept the matter of the Rings very secret, as long as they could...)" (The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien, p. 279).
31. "The Tale of Years" indicates Celebrimbor forged the Three around the year S.A. 1590, and Sauron forged the One around the year S.A. 1600 (The Return of the King, p. 364). Presumably, all of the Elves who were wearing Great Rings when Sauron spoke the ominous words "One Ring to rule them All, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all and in the Darkness bind them" perished in the war, and the chronicle of those events was written down from secondhand sources. The only account of how they received their Rings indicates that Gil-galad and Galadriel were not original Keepers, but were entrusted with the Rings after Celebrimbor discovered Sauron's treachery (Unfinished Tales, p. 237).
32. "..The denuding of the lands was increased during the war in Eriador; for the exiled natives welcomed Sauron and hoped for his victory over the Men of the Sea. Sauron knew of the importance to his enemies of the Great Haven and its ship-yards, and he used these haters of Númenor as spies and guides for his raiders..." (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 263).
33. "But now Sauron attempted to gain the mastery of Eriador: Lórinand could wait. But as he ravaged the lands, slaying or driving off all the small groups of Men and hunting the remaining Elves, many fled to swell Elrond s host to the northward.... Eriador was cleared of the enemy, but lay largely in ruins" (*ibid*., pp. 238-9).
34. This migration is purely speculative. However, there are several reasons why it seems this is what happened:

A) In describing the Rohirrim to Frodo, Faramir says of them: ."..Indeed it is said by our lore-masters that they have from of old this affinity with us that they are come from those same Three Houses of Men as -were the Númenóreans in their beginning; not from Hador the Goldenhaired, the Elf-friend, maybe, yet from such of his sons and people as went not over Sea into the West, refusing the call" (*The Two Towers*, p. 287).

B) Appendix A says of the relationship between Gondor and the Northmen "the kings showed them favour, since they were the nearest in kin of lesser Men to the Dúnedain (being for the most part descendants of those peoples from whom the Edain of old had come)...." (*The Return of the King*, p. 326).

C) Appendix F says "most of the Men of the northern regions of West-lands were descended from the Edain of the First Age, or from their close kin" (*ibid*., p. 407).

D) The essay "The Northmen and the Wainriders" in "Cirion and Eorl and the Friendship of Gondor and Rohan" says "these Northmen were descendants of the same race of Men as those who in the First Age passed into the West of Middle-earth [Beleriand] and became the allies of the Eldar in their wars with Morgoth" (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 288). A note appended to this sentence reads: "The Northmen appear to have been most nearly akin to the third and greatest of the peoples of the Elf-friends, ruled by the House of Hador. [Authors note.]" (p. 310).

E) The Northmen were those Men who lived in the Vales of Anduin and along the Celduin in the Third Age, according to the Appendix in *The Return of the King* (p. 407). The earliest mentions of these Men are provided in "The Sindarin Princes of the Silvan Elves" and "The Disaster of the Gladden Fields" (Unfinished Tales, pp. 259, 276) where they are named as the Free Men of the North and "certain Woodmen who got news to Thranduil by runners "Both essays indicate the times when these Northmen enter into the tales are early in the Third Age (i.e., more-or-less contemporary events).

F) No further mention is made of Edainic peoples in Eriador until the Faithful begin settling in Middle-earth close to Lindon. The only other Men who are specifically placed in the north are the Men of Bree, who came from a branch of the Dunlendings who settled in Tyrn Gorthad (Cf. note 26 above). It would seem the Edainic peoples had, by the end of the Second Age, disappeared completely from Eriador, or at least no longer controlled the vast region they once had.

G) Since many Men had fled to Elrond during the War of the Elves and Sauron, they would have been in a position to pass east over the mountains into the Vales of Anduin. Eriador had been laid waste and the great forests had been burned off by Sauron. There was probably no where else they could have settled for many years after the war...

35. Or renewed contact with them, since they marched with him against Sauron at the end of the Second Age.
36. "From that time war never ceased between Sauron and the Elves;....Yet there came at length a stay in the onslaught of Sauron upon the

westlands. For, as is told in Akallabêth, he was challenged by the might of Númenor" (*The Silmarillion*, pp. 288, 290).

37. In fact, they began leaving Númenor during Tar-Aldarion's time, but the sources do not agree on when there were no more Drúedain in Númenor. One account says the last departed when Sauron was brought to Númenor by Ar-Pharazôn (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 386).

38. This seems to be implied by the passage which reads: "Now the Elendili dwelt mostly in the -western regions of Númenor; but Ar-Gimilzôr commanded all that he could discover to be of this party to remove from the west and dwell in the east of the land; and there they were -watched. And the chief dwelling of the Faithful in the later days was thus nigh to the harbour of Rómenna; thence many set sail to Middle-earth, seeking the northern coasts where they might speak still with the Eldar in the kingdom of Gilgalad. This was known to the kings, but they hindered it not, so long as the Elendili departed from their lands and did not return..." (*The Silmarillion*, p. 268). There was only one king after Ar-Gimilzôr who was unfriendly to the Faithful, and that was Ar-Pharazôn, his grandson. Nothing in the tale of Ar-Pharazôn indicates that the Faithful stopped sailing to Middle-earth.

39. After the destruction of Númenor Sauron returned to Middle-earth, and "there he found that the power of Gilgalad had grown great in the years of his absence, and it was spread now over wide regions of the north and west, and had passed beyond the Misty Mountains and the Great River even to the borders of Greenwood the Great, and was drawing night to the strong places where once he had dwelt secure" (*ibid.*, p. 290).

40. "..in those days the only Númenórean roads were the great road linking Gondor and Arnor, through Calenardhon, then north over the Gwathló at Tharbad, and so at last to Fornost; and the East-West Road from the Grey Havens to Imladris..." {Unfinished Tales, p. 278).

41. 41. "In the early days of the kingdoms the most expeditious route from one to the other (except for great armaments) was found to be by sea to the ancient port at the head of the estuary of the Gwathló and so to the river-port of Tharbad, and thence by Road" (itd., p. 264).

42. "..And all the coasts and seaward regions of the western world suffered great change and ruin in that time; for the seas invaded the lands, and shores foundered, and ancient isles were drowned, and new isles were uplifted; and hills crumbled and rivers were turned into strange courses" (*The Silmarillion*, p. 280). 43. "..Before the decay of the North Kingdom...both kingdoms shared an interest in this region [Enedwaith], and together built and maintained the Bridge of Tharbad and the long causeways that carried the road to it on either side of the Gwathló and Mitheithel across the fens in the plains of Minhiriath and Enedwaith [Cf. note 41 above]. A considerable garrison of soldiers, mariners, and engineers had been kept there until the seventeenth century of the Third Age..." (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 264).

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The Indigenous Population of Eriador and Gondor

and its relationships to the Númenóreans and their Allies

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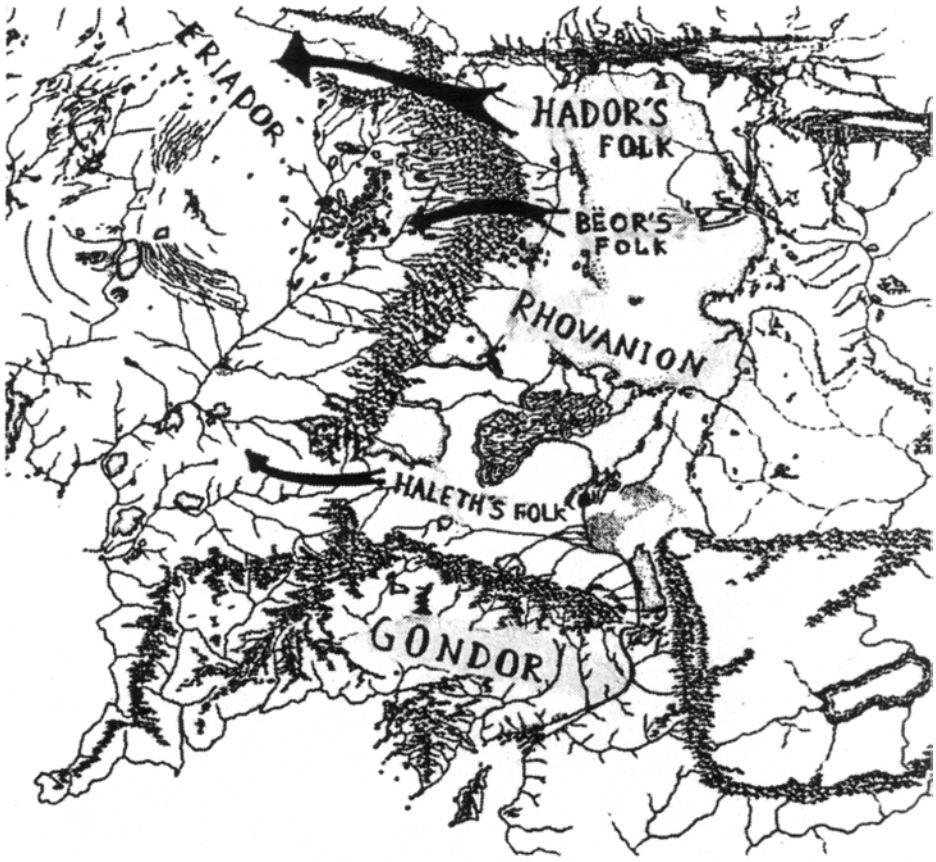
The recorded history of Middle-earth centers on the Elves and those Men who joined them. Little is known about the other,), those inhabitants of Eriador and Gondor who were not reckoned, however loosely, among the Elf-friends. Elves and Dwarves ignored them, the Hobbits had no accounts transmitted, official Dúnadan and Rohirric policy undifferentiatedly stamped them with labels reading "wild" and "enemy"—despite their remote ancestors, the Three Houses of the Edain, having all shown "traces of mingling in the past with Men of other kinds." (DM) Thus, the story of their fates was never compiled but spread in mere glimpses across numerous sources. It is, however, worth the task to extract their many-faceted history from the available material.

The First Age

From the First Age, scarcely any data on them have survived. The Elves of Beleriand did not gaze beyond the Ered Luin, and the early Men possessed no written records. It can be deduced, however, that they immigrated into northwestern Middle-earth on two different paths.

The Peoples of Bëor and Hador crossed the Hithaeglir or Misty Mountains in the North, close to the dreadful Ered Engrin and yet outside of Morgoth's Shadow. Shortly before they reached Beleriand, "in Eriador and Rhovanion (especially in the northern parts) their kindred must already have occupied much of the land." (DM)

Those of Rhovanion "appear to have been most nearly akin to the third and greatest of the peoples of the Elf-friends, ruled by the House of Hador" (CE), while those who settled in Eriador after the crossing of the Misty Mountains were mixed of Hador's and Beor's Peoples (AE). The latter contingency was later reinforced by relatives who in fear of the Evil Power turned back from their encampment in Beleriand; "and they went back over the mountains into Eriador, and were forgotten." (S) Somewhat after them, the Forodwaith followed their traces and settled right in the ever-cold valleys of the Iron Mountains where later was the Bay of Forochel. And by many generations they grew accustomed to the inhospitable



climate. Only a few of them lasted to come into the age of history: their chief descendants became the Lossoth, a nomadic people along the coasts of Forochel.

The people of Haleth, however, took the Southern path through the later Gap of Rohan, and then turned northwards to Eriador, rejoining the other Peoples at Ered Luin. This is evident from the notion that "an emigrant branch of the Drúedain accompanied [them], but most had remained in the White Mountains, in spite of their persecution by later-arrived Men, who had relapsed into the service of the Dark." Some of the Drúedain, though, later expanded down the Cape of Andrast without meeting resistance, and a few of them once would make it even to Númenor— for a while (TD). In the Third Age, some of their remnants were known as the *Woses* who were living hidden in the Drúadan Forest, hunted by Rohirrim like beasts. Thus in general, the Drúedain turned distrustful against other Men and remained secretive throughout most of their existence.

But important for this discussion are their dark persecutors, for they probably provide the earliest glimpse of the fertile nation which in Beleriand was collectively called *the Easterlings* and by Third Age historians the pre-Númenóreans. Slowly they expanded through Gondor and southern Eriador. A popular legend among the Men of Bree, descending from them, tells that in this very location they had already "survived the turmoils of the Elder Days" (FR); but such claims have to be taken with a grain of salt.

The Second Age

It is evident that in the Second Age, "the dark years for Men of Middle-earth" (KR) in which "Middle-earth went backward and light and wisdom faded" (AK), the pre-Númenóreans finally entered recorded history as an already numerous and widespread population. Starting out from their abodes in the White Mountains, they had slowly filtered through the Gap of Rohan: "in the Dark Years [they] had removed to the southern dales of the Misty Mountains; and thence some had passed into the empty lands as far north as Bree." (LP)

In the first millennium of the Dark Years, the pre-Númenóreans, terrorized by scattered refugees from eliminated Angband, inhabited much of the territory between the shores and the Hithaeglir. None of them yet admitted obediance to Sauron, though, and "Men in those parts remain [ed] more or less uncorrupted if ignorant [and] in a simple 'Homeric' state of patriarchal and tribal life." (Letters, no. 131) In fact, many of those who dared to live in the forests "of the shore-lands south of the Ered Luin, especially in Minhiriath, were as later historians recognized the kin of the Folk of Haleth." (DM)

But most of the pre-Númenóreans lived far from the coasts, which they feared due to the past inundations. (DM) "The Minhiriath and the western half of Enedwaith between the Greyflood and the Isen were still covered with dense forest. The shores of the Bay of Belfalas were still mainly desolate, except for a haven and small settlement of Elves at the mouth of the confluence of Morthond and Ringló." (DM) The Elves of this port of Edhellond reported that "there was already a primitive harbour there of fisherfolk, but these in fear of the Eldar fled into the mountains" (GC), joining those who were already there. In the late Third Age, their cultural influence was still preserved in a few geographical names throughout Gondor.

In the interior of the continent, the pre-Númenóreans had by then turned into herd-tenders: presumably of sheep and goats, for horses would have been of small use in the endless forests. Towards the North they apparently had advanced as far as the line from Sarn Ford to the junction of Gwathló and Mitheithel. Here their expansion came to a halt: northern Eriador they found already populated by the Northmen, the descendants of those colonies which the Houses of Bëor and Hador had left behind, mingling with late Edain from Beleriand who had not taken ships to Númenor. These were mainly concentrated in what later turned into the population centers of Arnor: "about Lake Evendim, in the North Downs and the Weather Hills, and in the lands between as far as the Brandywine, west of which they often wandered though they did not dwell there." (AE, DM)

Thus alone of the indigenous population of Middle-earth they had stayed in contact with Gil-galad's kingdom of Lindon, and "they were friendly with the Elves, though they held them in awe and close friendships between them were rare. Also they feared the Sea and would not look upon it." (DM) Yet some sources even indicate temporarily mixed settlements, for numerous Elves led by Galadriel and Celeborn "for a while ... dwelt in the country about Lake Nenuial (Evendim, north of the Shire)." (GC) It may be possible that the pre-Númenórean enclave of Bree-country was then already present inmidst these Northmen territories. Anyway, there was never likely to have been a distinct borderline between the Northmen and the pre-Númenóreans, and movement to and fro must have been abundant.

When about the year S.A. 600 the first Númenórean ships arrived in Lindon, meeting with Gil-galad, "the news spread swiftly and Men in Eriador were filled with wonder." Before long, a meeting between the sailors and twelve messengers of the Northmen came to pass on the Tower Hills, and for a limited time "they mingled in friendship." (AE) It seems that it was this meeting which found its way into the Bree-country legend according to which the arriving shipmen had found the Bree-folk still where they had been left in the Elder Days. The newcomers remarked that "the native people," whether Northmen or pre-Númenóreans, "were fairly numerous and warlike, but they were forest-dwellers, scattered communities without central leadership." (GC) Unfortunately, the Númenóreans "failed to recognize the Forest-folk of Minhiriath as 'kinsmen', and confused them with Men of the Shadow" (DM): a thorough misunderstanding which led to all those tragic consequences from which Eriador was later bound to suffer.

The situation which Middle-earth presented to the Númenóreans resembled that which the Romans found in Gallia and Germania: an uncountable lot of tribal territories among which border skirmishes and raids were frequent but large-scale wars rare. Like the Romans, the Númenóreans began to cultivate the countries, "and none yet dared to withstand them. For most of the Men of that age that sat under the Shadow [i.e. the pre-Númenóreans] were now grown weak and fearful. And coming among them the Númenóreans taught them many things," such as agriculture, stonecraft and smithying; but also their languages, "for

the tongues of the Men of Middle-earth" sounded to the Númenóreans (who were used to the soft Elven and Edain tongues) like they "were fallen into brutishness, and they cried like harsh birds, or snarled like savage beasts." (HA)

By the Numenorean colonization, "the Men of Middle-earth were comforted, and here and there upon the western shores the houseless woods drew back, and Men shook off the yoke of the offspring of Morgoth, and unlearned their terror of the dark. And they revered the memory of the tall Sea-kings, and when they had departed they called them gods, hoping for their return; for at that time the Numenoreans dwelt never long in Middle-earth, nor made there as yet any habitation of their own." (AK) Very probably we have to imagine the pre-Númenóreans now like the later Bree-folk, "brown-haired, broad, and rather short, cheerful and independent." (FR)

However, those houseless woods drawing back from the coasts are only a euphemism, concealing the real events. What had indeed started was an exploitative tree-cutting in supply of Númenórean shipyards, which had begun under the reign of Tar-Aldarion [d. S. A. 1075]. At first, the Númenóreans restricted their environmentally destructive labors to the coastal areas and the riversides, and the pre-Númenóreans "did not become hostile until the tree-felling became devastating." (GC) But in the late first millennium, "as the power of Númenor became more and more occupied with great navies, for which their own land could not supply sufficient timber without ruin, their felling of trees and transportation of wood to their shipyards in Númenor or on the coast of Middle-earth ... became reckless." (DM) And when they had completely wrecked the banks and shorelines and hacked their paths ever further inland, the Halethian forest-dwellers "became bitter enemies of the Númenóreans, because of their ruthless treatment and their devastation of the forests, and this hatred remained unappeased in their descendants, causing them to join with any enemies of Númenor." (DM) In self-defense, they now "attacked and ambushed the Númenóreans when they could, and the Númenóreans treated them as enemies, and became ruthless in their fellings, giving no thought to husbandry or replanting." (GC) Inevitably, "the hostility was growing and dark men out of the mountains were thrusting into Enedwaith" in support of their kinsmen driven back by the Venturers, the Númenórean sea-farer guild. (AE) Having taken up a bitter guerrilla war, the pre-Númenóreans successfully advanced towards the coastline, so that about the year S.A. 840, Tar-Aldarion found the haven of Vinyalondë or Lond Daer "overthrown by great seas and plundered by hostile men." (AE)

"In Aldarion s day the Númenóreans did not yet desire more room, and his Venturers remained a small people." But "Men near the coasts were growing afraid of the Númenóreans, or were openly hostile; and Aldarion heard rumours of some lord in Middle-earth who hated the men of the ships." (AE) For from his primary abode in far-away Rhûn Sauron had been paying close attention to the events, and now he began to exploit and support the conflict, following his own designs. Sauron took the opportunity to draw closer to the Númenórean force whose cultural and military power much concerned him; and after the year S.A. 1000, when he had installed himself in Mordor and was raising the Barad-dûr, "the Shadow crept along the coasts and men whom [the Númenóreans] had befriended became afraid or hostile." To their sorrow, the shipmen found "that iron was used against them by those to whom they had revealed it." (DN) They answered the challenge with cultivation by the sword's edge, and "the native folk that survived fled from Minhiriath into the dark woods of the great Cape of Eryn Vorn, south of the mouth of the Baranduin, which they dared not cross, even if they could, for fear of the Elvenfolk. From Enedwaith they took refuge in the eastern mountains where afterwards was Dunland; they did not cross the Isen nor take refuge in the great promontory between Isen and Lefnui [being the Cape of Andrast] ... because of the 'Púkel-men' [i.e. the Drúedain]" (GC)

Cleansing the area and destroying what lay before them, the Númenóreans now pushed far into Minhiriath and Enedwaith, establishing themselves inland as far as the river Glanduin, "the southern boundary of Eregion, beyond which pre-Númenóreans and generally unfriendly peoples lived, such as the ancestors of the Dunlendings" (GC) — who had, of course, no reason left for any friendliness. Their retreat to Eregion seems surprising, for the Noldorin Gwaith-i-Mírdain had

already set up their community there; but presumably it was too small and inaccessible to be of much concern to the Proto-Dunlendings as they might now be called. Or perhaps in comparison to the pressure by the advancing Númenóreans the Mírdain's proximity was considered the lesser of two evils. Sauron might even have considered the Proto-Dunlendings' presence in the neighborhood of the Noldor to be potentially useful, and he may have looked for them not to move from where he wanted them to be.

Under given circumstances, he found a fertile soil from which to recruit guerrilla forces. "The exiled natives welcomed Sauron and hoped for his victory over the Men of the Sea. Sauron ... used these haters of Númenor as spies and guides for his raiders." And they "made much havoc on the fringe of the forests." But by the end of the 17th century of the Second Age, Sauron had forged the One Ring and completed Barad-dûr, his immeasurable fortress: now the worst times for the pre-Númenóreans set in. For he felt strong enough now to attempt assailing all of Eriador at once and driving Númenóreans and Lindon Elves into the Sea. During the following War of the Elves and Sauron, "he ravaged the lands, slaying or drawing off all the small groups of Men." By S.A. 1700 he "had mastered all Eriador, save only besieged Imladris, and had reached the line of the River Lhûn." Likely it was then that he first established, or won over, communities of evil Men in north-eastern Eriador whose descendants would later ally with the witch-realm of Angmar.

Eventually, a Númenórean fleet arrived at the port of Vinyalondë, catching Sauron's advance troops in the rear and utterly defeating them. It was reported that during this time the felling of trees for supply turned more devastating than ever (GC), and shortly after "Eriador was cleared of the enemy, but lay largely in ruins." By then, "most of the old forests had been destroyed." (GC) The Proto-Dunlendings presumably had for some part escaped from the massacres and had again crossed the Glanduin back to Dunland which now seemed safer than wrecked Eregion. But the main burden of Sauron's eradication campaign the Northmen of Eriador had had to carry, and they mostly vanished from recorded history: at the beginning of the Third Age their lands still were reported as "empty" (LP). Only the Proto-Dunlendish enclave of Bree-country which had remained distinct, though it had assimilated much from the cultural exchange with the adjacent Northmen, seems to have survived by lucky chance, but it never recovered to its former size.

Soon after, the King's Men, those Númenóreans who had turned away from Valar and Elves, pressed into Middle-earth with increasing lust for power. They "now made settlements on the west-shores, but these became rather strongholds and 'factories' of lords seeking wealth, and the Númenóreans became tax-gatherers carrying off over the sea ever more and more goods in their great ships." (Letters, no. 131) Especially King Tar-Calmacil (d. S.A. 2899) earned a bad reputation on that behalf, for "in his youth he was a great captain, and won wide lands along the coasts of Middle-earth" (LE), so that even Sauron withdrew once more into the East. The occupied areas were turned by the King's Men into dominions: till the end of the Second Age the "scattered communities without central leadership" had been replaced by numerous vassal states and vice-kingdoms, some led by Númenórean overlords, others by local princelings of Númenor's grace, such as one self-proclaimed "King of the Mountains" who resided in the western Ered Nimrais and, with his people, served and feared the Dark Lord. Probably much to the dismay of the still loyal "Númenórean settlers about the Mouths of Anduin [who] ventured north of their great haven at Pelargir and made contact with Men who dwelt in the valleys on either side of the White Mountains." (DM)

It seems that Sauron took advantage of the worsening situation of Middle-earth by "donating" the Nine Rings to selected overlords of the dominions: for three of them "were great lords of Númenórean race," it was said (AK), certainly including the later Nazgûl-lord and Khamûl, the Shadow of the East; the other Nazgûl probably originated in the indigenous population. Finally, in the time of Ar-Pharazôn, Sauron began "to assail the havens and forts of the Númenóreans, and invaded the coastlands under their dominion." (HA) But when Ar-Pharazôn landed and took Sauron into (supposed) captivity, the situation of the pre-Númenóreans improved for a while. Before Númenor foundered, "the power of Gil-galad had grown great..., and it was spread now over wide regions of the north and west, and had passed beyond the Misty Mountains and the Great River even to the borders of Greenwood the Great, and was drawing nigh to [Mordor]." (S) Fearing the far-ranging power of Lindon, the King's Men, sent by Sauron to colonize and carry tribute and victims for human sacrifice, left the pre-Númenóreans alone, concentrating on the far-away coasts of Harad. However, the Elves will not have bothered much about them, and the pre-Númenóreans will have continued to dwell alone in their petty communities, superstitiously fearing any alien power, whether coming from the West or the East.

But in the Cataclysm of S.A. 3319, when Númenor was destroyed, also the Númenórean dominions were almost completely eradicated, causing countless casualties. Also, the pre-Númenóreans suffered terrible losses. "The Bay of Belfalas was much filled at the east and south, so that Pelargir which had been only a few miles from the sea was left far inland, and Anduin carved a new path by many mouths to the Bay. And the Isle of Tolfalas was almost destroyed, and was left at last like a barren and lonely mountain in the water not far from the issue of the River." (YS) Survivors were found only far inland: in and around the White and the Misty Mountains, in Eregion and Dunland, from where they slowly repopulated Enedwaith and Minhiriath—and in Bree-country and beyond.

When the Faithful, the Exiles of Númenor, arrived and established themselves in Middle-earth, again "many Men turned ... from evil and became subject to the heirs of Elendil." (RP) Yet with regard to past events, most pre-Númenóreans still had few reasons to love the Dúnedain, particularly as they had stayed unaware of the latter's inner disputes and had never learned to distinguish between the King's Men and the Faithful. Thus "yet many more remembered Sauron in their hearts and hated the kingdoms of the West," (RP) and other pre-Númenóreans still who did not quite go that far yet stayed in tormenting fear of the Dark Lord. The current King of the Mountains, apparently the last remaining one of the local dominion regents, first swore allegiance to Isildur, "but when Sauron returned and grew in might again, Isildur summoned the Men of the Mountains to fulfill their oath, and they would not: for they had worshipped Sauron in the Dark Years. .. .They fled before the wrath of Isildur, and did not dare to go forth to war on Sauron's part; and they hid themselves in secret places in the mountains and had no dealings with other men, but slowly dwindled in the barren hills." (RK) Eventually, they faded and became the Dead Men of Dunharrow, ghastly shadows haunting the dark vales of Ered Nimrais.

The Gwathuirim (or, later more commonly, the Dunlendings) as well had become subject to the crown of Gondor, though more by decree than by conviction, and presumably during the War of the Last Alliance, many were pressed into auxiliary cohorts.

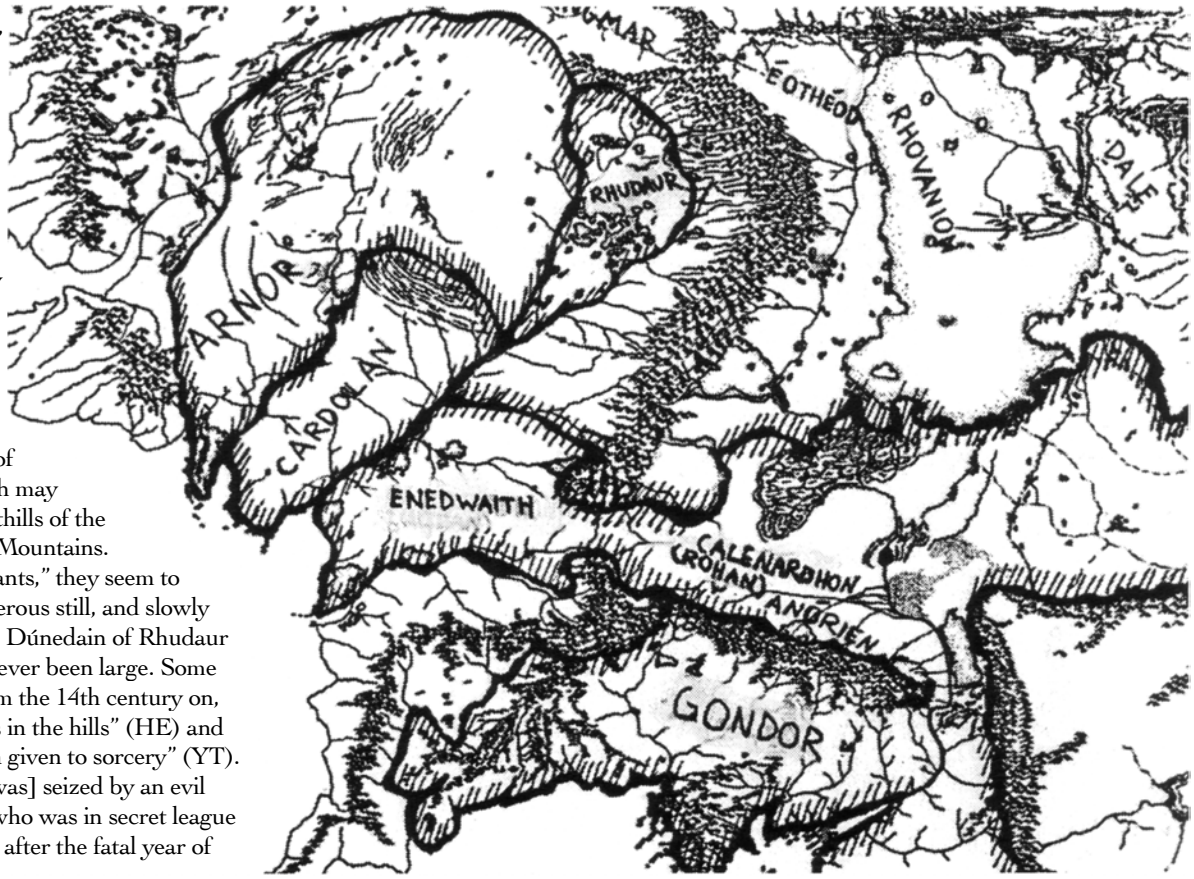
THE THIRD AGE

It seems that the two Realms-in-Exile followed quite distinct minority policies. The people who in the later half of the Second Age "had passed into the empty lands" in the North "had become subjects of the North Kingdom of Arnor and had taken up the Westron tongue." (LP) This concerned, among others, the Bree-folk, surviving and immigrating pre-Númenóreans and Numenoreans — from the ancient dominions, perhaps some remnants of the Northmen, and eventually the Hobbits: "When they entered Eriador (early in the second [millennium] of the Third Age) Men were still numerous there, both Númenóreans and other Men related to the Atani, beside remnants of Men of evil kinds, hostile to the Kings." (DM) Aside from the latter, these "Númenórized" minorities turned into trustworthy auxiliaries to the throne of Annúminas: even the Hobbits felt ready to send troops on request (FR).

The others, however, had not forgotten the tensions of old. They joined ranks with Angmar, where there "were gathered many evil men." (KR) Especially the easternmost province and later sub-kingdom of Rhudaur was exposed to severe pressure by "Hillmen of the North," a mysterious population which now for the first time entered the chronicles of the West. They were no doubt descending from the "remnants of Men of evil kinds," but aside from this, little is known about them. It cannot be deduced whether they were Northmannish survivors from the Weather Hills, finally fallen under the dominion of the Shadow, pre-Númenóreans — even Easterlings — or maybe a remnant of the Forodwaith which may have dwelt in the foothills of the northernmost Misty Mountains. Despite being "remnants," they seem to have been quite numerous still, and slowly they pushed back the Dúnedain of Rhudaur whose number had never been large. Some sources state that from the 14th century on, they "build dark forts in the hills" (HE) and that they were "much given to sorcery" (YT). In the end, "power [was] seized by an evil lord of the Hillmen, who was in secret league with Angmar." Thus, after the fatal year of T.A. 1409, "Rhudaur was occupied by evil Men subject to Angmar, and the Dúnedain that remained there were slain or fled west." (KR) Probably at this time, allied Trolls appeared in eastern Rhudaur, advancing into the regions which later were known as the Trollshaws.

"But all [Hillmen] were destroyed in the war that brought the North Kingdom to its end." (FR) The losses were tremendous on both sides, and Eriador, which had never really recovered from Sauron's genocidal campaign of the mid-Second Age, fell once more into desolation. Its sparse population growth was finally irrevocably broken by the Great Plague of T.A. 1636 from which all the remaining settled areas suffered almost fatal blows. "Minhiriath had been almost entirely deserted, though a few secretive hunter-folk lived in the woods [of Eryn Vorn, etc.]" (RK), "a fairly numerous but barbarous fisher-folk dwelt between the mouths of the Gwathló and the Angren [Isen]" (GC), said by some to be "akin in race and speech to the Driiedain of the woods of Anórien" (FI), and "in Enedwaith the remnants of the Dunlendings [still] lived in the east, in the foothills of the Misty Mountains." (FI) But even northern Dunland had now fallen deserted (RK), and the Stoors, finding their abode increasingly untendable, finally had headed for the Shire. The Dunlendings alone had "suffered ... less than most, since they dwelt apart and had few dealings with other men." (LP) North of them, though, only a few Dwarves were later found, notably Thrór (KR).

Thus, the history of the pre-Númenóreans in the North had almost come to an end. Till the Fourth Age, former Arnor never was repopulated. "In Bilbo s time great areas of Eriador were empty of Men." (DM) From the south, never were attempts made to settle it. It must be understood that Gondor's eyes had always been turned East and South, never northwards; and the surviving Dunlendings were both not numerous enough and too superstitious to immigrate in large numbers into the vast, now desolate regions. After Arnor had fallen into oblivion the city of Tharbad (where once a large population of pre-Númenóreans may have dwelt in the suburbs) turned into the *Ultima Thule* of its age: beyond, it seemed, there lay an almost mythical country, full of strange, other-worldly creatures, such as Elves, Dwarves, Orcs, and probably worse. And then after a long and dreadful winter Tharbad was inundated and fell into ruin, and its Bridge was no more. Now the river Greyflood formed not only an effective psychological barrier but a physical one as well. Only those few who had no other hope established fragile trade connections to Bree-country and beyond. Among them was "an outlaw driven from Dunland, where many said



repeatedly was found traveling from Dunland to "the Shire, where he had been negotiating for the purchase of leaf and other supplies." (HR)

The southern kingdom had taken a completely different stance. While Arnor was mainly looking for inner stability, Gondor followed an expansionistic policy and likewise maintained a more restrictive attitude against its minorities. Isildur's curse against the King of the Mountains may have been only the most prominent of several such incidents, and it was probably traditioned for a long time among the indigenous population. In the 8th century of the Third Age, the victories of crown prince Tarannon "extended the sway of Gondor far along the shore-lands on either side of the Mouths of Anduin" (HE), and many pre-Númenóreans were subdued, never to regain political independence.

On a private level, much intercourse between Dúnedain and the occupied Gondorian minorities was established. Mixed marriages became frequent, and slowly "the blood of the Númenóreans became much mingled with that of other men, and their power and wisdom was diminished." (RP) This concerned chiefly the pre-Númenóreans in and around the White Mountains, except the later Dead Men of Dunharrow and the isolated Drúedain. Gondors easternmost provinces, meanwhile, mingled with the Free Men of the North (i.e., Rhovanion), who had been "spreading southwards: mostly east of the Greenwood, though some were establishing themselves in the eaves of the forest and the grasslands of the Vales of Anduin," where "they had been mingled with men of broader and heavier build" (GC), causing among them an average loss of physical height.

In the Third Age, these Northmen had turned into "a numerous and powerful confederation of peoples living in the wide plains between Mirkwood and the River Running, great breeders of horses and riders renowned for their skill and endurance, though their settled homes were in the eaves of the forest ... and [they] contributed much of their blood to the people of Gondor." (CE) They, by now separated into various tribes such as the Woodmen, the Dale Men, and the early Eótheód, formed a veritable "bulwark of Gondor, keeping its northern and eastern frontier from invasion; though that was not fully realised by the Kings until the bulwark was weakened and at last destroyed." (CE)

But the most sturdy of the Gondorian minorities proved to be the small nation of the Dunlendings. Enedwaith was "shared by the North and South Kingdoms, but was never settled by Númenóreans owing to the hostility of the Gwathuirim (Dunlendings), except in the fortified town and haven about the great bridge over the Greyflood at Tharbad." (DM) Indeed: despite a full 2000 years of political domination by the Dúnedain, the Dunlendings remained in spirit as independent as their relatives of Bree-country. Evidently, they maintained some kind of autonomy within the confines of Gondor's influence. Their recall of lost sovereignty never ceased, and while their northern kinsmen were quickly "Númenórized" and merged into the Arnorian culture, the Dunlendings throughout the age-long occupation "did ... hold to their old speech and manners: a secret folk, unfriendly to the Dúnedain" (LP). This old speech was a late descendant of the original language which the Folk of Haleth had spoken, alien to the speeches of the other Edain, and otherwise forgotten. (DM)

With regard to their sufferings throughout the Second Age, which certainly were passed on as unforgettable traditions (though the original reasons for the resentments no doubt were long forgotten), it should not come as a surprise that they "had little love for Gondor" (LP). But "though hardy and bold enough [they] were too few and too much in awe of the might of the Kings to trouble them" (LP), and the Kings generally ignored them. Yet contrary to popular belief, they did not display any more significant vulnerability against the Shadow than they had done in the late Second Age when need had seemed the most urgent. All throughout the Third Age, they never again would join sides with Sauron, save for one single occurrence: they rejected business with Orcs and recordedly expelled those from their society who were found to have dealings with them (HR), they did not even collaborate with Saurons Easterling worshippers who posed a constant threat to the Peoples of the West, though occasionally they took advantage of these conflicts when available. Where there were no such animosities kept in tradition, however, the Dunlendings seem to have remained quite a hospitable nation, though secretive and self-sufficient (a natural and understandable property, shared by many other non-Númenórean ethnic groups). For example, the early Stoor branch of the Hobbits lived as unharmed near them "at the borders of Dunland" (FT), or even among them, as they later lived in Bree-country. Cultural exchange was evidently frequent, and from that, the Stoors "appear to have adopted a language related to Dunlendish before they came north to the Shire." (LP)

By their stealthy and untroubling way of life, however, the Dunlendings increasingly faded out of Gondor s east- and south-oriented attention, and "when the days of the Kings ended (1975-2050) and the waning of Gondor began, they ceased in fact to be subjects of Gondor." (FI) Slowly, with Eriador being inaccessible, and West and South inhabited by that more than dubious "barbarous fisher-folk," they began to expand into the only direction possible: eastwards, into the Gondorian province of Calenardhon, later known as Rohan. "During the Watchful Peace (from 2063 to 2460) the [Númenórean] people of Calenardhon dwindled ... the garrisons of the forts were not renewed, and were left to the care of local hereditary chieftains whose subjects were of more and more mixed blood. For the Dunlendings drifted steadily and unchecked over the Isen." (FI)

It must be considered a tragic consequence of the notorious Gondorian ignorance of Dunlendish positions that, after the Battle of the Camp (T.A. 1944), it was Calenardhon which was passed on by decree to the Eótheód or Rohirrim, migrating south from their territories north of Greenwood. To the Dunlendish herdsmen, these strange horse-breeders originally must have appeared simply as competitors for the pastures of Calenardhon, which was more fertile and prosperous than their own hilly regions. But the situation escalated beyond the point of no return when the Kings of the Rohirrim decided to rid themselves of local minorities their own way:

"Under Brego and Aldor the Dunlendings were rooted out again and driven away beyond the Isen, and the Fords of Isen were guarded." What was worse, Aldor "even raided their lands in Enedwaith byway of reprisal." (FI) This brutal ethnic cleansing the Dunlendings, the "wild hillmen and herd-folk," as the Rohirrim called them (TT), never forgot. In times of peace there was yet much traffic with the western-march of Rohan. Even Freca, father of the usurper Wulf and counselor of Helm Hammerhand, "had, men said, much Dunlendish blood, and was dark-haired" (KR) in contrast to the often blond Men of the North. But against the distant court of Edoras, ever since Aldor's pogrom the Dunlendings maintained a hatred so strong that "whenever the Rohirrim were weak or in trouble the Dunlendings renewed their attacks" against "the 'wild Northmen' who had usurped the land" (FI). Centuries later a man from Rohan still found reason to recall: "Not in half a thousand years have they forgotten the grievance that the lords of Gondor gave the Mark to Eorl the Young and made alliance with him." (TT)

Such statements meant of course to project the responsibility away from themselves and onto the distant throne of Minas Tirith. Neutral historians record, though, that it was clearly the massacre in the western-march and Enedwaith by which "the Rohirrim earned the hatred of the Dunlendings, which was not appeased until the return of the King, then far off in the future." (FI) At that time, however, Gondor considered the unsolved Dunlendish question a matter of Rohan's interior politics. This was an unfortunate position, for had it put its weight into arranging a political solution in time, the wizard Saruman could not have exploited the brooding conflict, almost to the ruin of both Rohan and Gondor. But "the enmity of the 'wild' Dunlendings seemed of small account to the Stewards. In the reign of King Déor (2699 to 2718) ... the line of the Gondorian chieftains of Angrenost [Isengard] had failed, and the command of the fortress passed into the hands of a family of the people. These, as has been said, were already long before of mixed blood, and they were now more friendly disposed to the Dunlendings ...; with Minas Tirith far away they no longer had any concern. After the death of King Aldor ... the Dunlendings unmarked by Rohan but with the connivance of Isengard began to filter into northern Westfold again, making setdements in the mountain glens west and east of Isengard and even in the southern eaves of Fangorn. In the reign of Déor they became openly hostile, raiding the herds and studs of the Rohirrim in Westfold. ... As was later known, the Dunlendings, having been admitted as friends, had seized the Ring of Isengard, slaying the few survivors of its ancient guards who were not (as were most) willing to merge with the Dunlendish folk. Deor sent word at once to the Steward in Minas Tirith (at that time, in the year 2710, Egalmoth), but he was unable to send help, and the Dunlendings remained in occupation of Isengard." (FI) The reason for Egalmoth's denial was "renewed war with the Orcs." (HE)

Then, in the year T.A. 2758, "Rohan was again invaded from the East, and the Dunlendings seeing their chance came over the Isen and down from Isengard. It was soon known that Wulf was their leader. ... Wulf took Edoras and sat in Meduseld and called himself king." (KR) This was, as mentioned before, the only recorded incident in which the Dunlendings actually found themselves side by side with servants of Sauron. Wulf, no pure Dunlending but a renegade of mostly Rohirric origin and in the west-march held in high esteem, had successfully negotiated with the Corsairs of Umb ar who, stirred by Sauron, at the same time were raiding the coasts around the Bay of Belfalas and beyond. Genuinely turning away the immediate peril of plunder from his own properties at the river Adorn, for once he managed that the Dunlendings "were joined by enemies of Gondor that had landed in the mouths of Lefnui and Isen." (KR)

Gondor was again asked for help, but due to the raids of as much as three Corsair fleets at its own coasts, once more she could not send any. Thus, the Dunlendings kept Edoras and Isengard occupied until "reduced by the great famine after the Long Winter (2758-9) they were starved out and capitulated to Fréalaf." (FI) "Before the year [2759] was ended the Dunlendings were driven out, even from Isengard" (KR), which was passed on to Saruman's control. And, due to the renewal of the old hostilities, "for many years the Rohirrim had to keep a strong force of Riders in the north of Westfold." (FI)

Of course, this guard was lessened with time and the border opened again. Then once more, many Dunlendings were found in the west-march. But their stay lasted only while Edoras was kept busy by Orc-bands which, escaping from the grip of the Long Winter, tried to invade the White Mountains. Almost as soon as these had been eliminated with Gondor's help, another pogrom was raised by Folcwine (2830-2903) and "he reconquered the west-march ... that Dunlendings had occupied." (KR)

Political decisions of course cannot override social realities, however: "beyond the Gap the land between Isen and Adorn was nominally part of the realm of Rohan; but though Folcwine had reclaimed it, driving out the Dunlendings that had occupied it, the people that remained were largely of mixed blood, and their loyalty to Edoras was weak." (FI) Thus Saruman found the ground well-prepared when he started to seek for recruits—and for victims of his Man/Orc cross-breeding program. The Dunlendings were ensnared by his cunning strategies, and finally found themselves side by side with the wizard's evil legions at Helm's Deep. But the awakening from Saruman's spells was terrible. Then, ultimately, the Dunlendish chieftains turned out to be able to recognize their own folly. To this sudden terror as well as to King Elessar's diplomacy may be attributed that in the Fourth Age the already closely related neighbors this side and that of the river Isen could be reconciled. "In Eomer's day in the Mark men had peace who wished for it." (KR)

ABBREVIATIONS

AE: "Aldarion and Erendis" in: *Unfinished Tales,* 1980.

AK: "Akallabêth" in: *The Silmarillion, 1977.*

CE: "Cirion and Eorl" in: *Unfinished Tales,* 1980.

DM: "Of Dwarves and Men," in: *The Peoples of Middle-earth,* 1996.

DN: "A Description of Númenor" in: *Unfinished Tales,* 1980.

FI: "The Battles at the Fords of Isen" in: *Unfinished Tales,* 1980.

FR: *The Fellowship of the Ring,* 1965.

GC: "The History of Galadriel and Celeborn" in: *Unfinished Tales,* 1980.

HA: "The History of the Akallabêth," in: *The Peoples of Middle-earth,* 1996.

HE "The Heirs of Elendil," in: *The Peoples of Middle-earth,* 1996.

HR: "The Hunt for the Ring" in: *Unfinished Tales,* 1980.

KR: "Annals of the Kings and Rulers," Appendix A in: *The Return of the King,* 1965.

LE: "The Line of Elros" in: *Unfinished Tales,* 1980.

Letters: *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien,* 1981.

LP: "The Languages and Peoples of the Third Age," Appendix B in: *The Return of the King,* 1965.

RP: "Of the Rings of Power" in: *The Silmarillion,* 1977.

RK: *The Return of the King,* 1965.

S: *The Silmarillion, 1977.*

S.A.: Second Age.

T.A.: Third Age.

TD: "The Drúedain" in: *Unfinished Tales, 1*980.

TT: *The Two Towers,* 1965.

YS: "The Tale of Years of the Second Age," in: *The Peoples of Middle-earth,* 1996.

YT: "The Tale of Years of the Third Age," in: *The Peoples of Middle-earth,* 1996.

Product Review

Coleman Charlton
Jessica Ney-Grimm, et al.

Middle-earth: The Dragons

Charlottesville, Virginia
Iron Crown Enterprises, 1996

Middle-earth: The Dragons (METD) is the first expansion that ICE has issued for METW. It is a set of 180 new cards that introduce us to the exciting world of Tolkien's dragons, including skirmishes in their lairs, their legendary treasures and their eternal quarrels with Dwarves. *METD* offers as a novelty the concept of "hoards," and a set of clarifications, modifications and additions to the *METW* standard rules. Let's have a look at each of them in detail.

The new cards follow the line laid down in *METW*: cool artwork, lots of information in each card and quotes from Tolkien's works (see *METW* review in *OH*: 14), yet it must be pointed up that the nature of the cards—lots of creatures, hazard enhancers, dragon-related cards and some powerful resources to combat all this stuff—will surely change the structure of our deck and our playing strategies, including the use of *The Wizards*. (I would point out that, while Radagast was the best option in *METW*, now Gandalf takes his place in *METD*.)

Keywords are cards identifiers, so they become susceptible of being affected by or usable with other cards, according to the text each card indicates. To the already existing keywords in *METW*, *METD* adds new ones like "Ritual," "Helm," "Fiddling attempt," "Drake" or "Dark enchantment."

Given the fact that the main theme of this expansion is dragons, lots of stuff concerning them is offered, so there are now nine unique dragons in total, who appear in three different ways called manifestations ("basic," "ahunt" and "at home"), and nine sites that function as the lairs of these powerful beasts. It is also possible to acquire hoard items, which can only be found at sites with a dragon automatic-attack (the nine lairs) or at those special sites where this is explicitly said (e.g., Framsburg).

Taking into account the time that *METW* has been "running in," ICE has tried to make good use of this experience by the introduction in *METD* of a set of changes in the rules, with the idea of improving the already high playability of the game. Because of this, each booster includes an insert with all the rule modifications. Concretely, the rules related to character facing multiple strikes, the elimination of corruption cards, the sideboard and the region movement are affected by these changes. What's more, the insert also offers a clarification about the hazard limit, a fundamental concept that has muddled more than one player.

ICE has also seized the opportunity to offer gamers the possibility of playing "scenarios"—games governed by special rules in which the victory condition is elected not by a Free Council, but pre-determined by the scenario's topic. The insert contains one such scenario, and three more can be obtained from the ICE's World Wide Web server.

I feel that *METD* is a product as serious and as well-planned as its predecessor and, as any expansion boasted of being so, it adds enough elements to *METW* to keep its numerous fans interested in the game, avoiding the easy way of simply offering new cards and nothing eke. If you also consider the present policy of ICE (two expansions per year) and what is scheduled for the future (*Dark Minions* is already in the shops and there are news about three more expansions, being the first *Lidless Eye*, a whole new basic game with 480 cards), *METW* followers can rub their hands and congratulate themselves for the "good care" they are going to receive.

If you would like to "riddle Smaug like Bilbo the Hobbit, match wits with Agburanar to discover his drakish flaw, and steal a priceless artifact while Scatha lies sleeping," then *METD* is a must for you; what are you waiting for?

Product Review

Middle-earth: The Wizards

(Unlimited Edition)

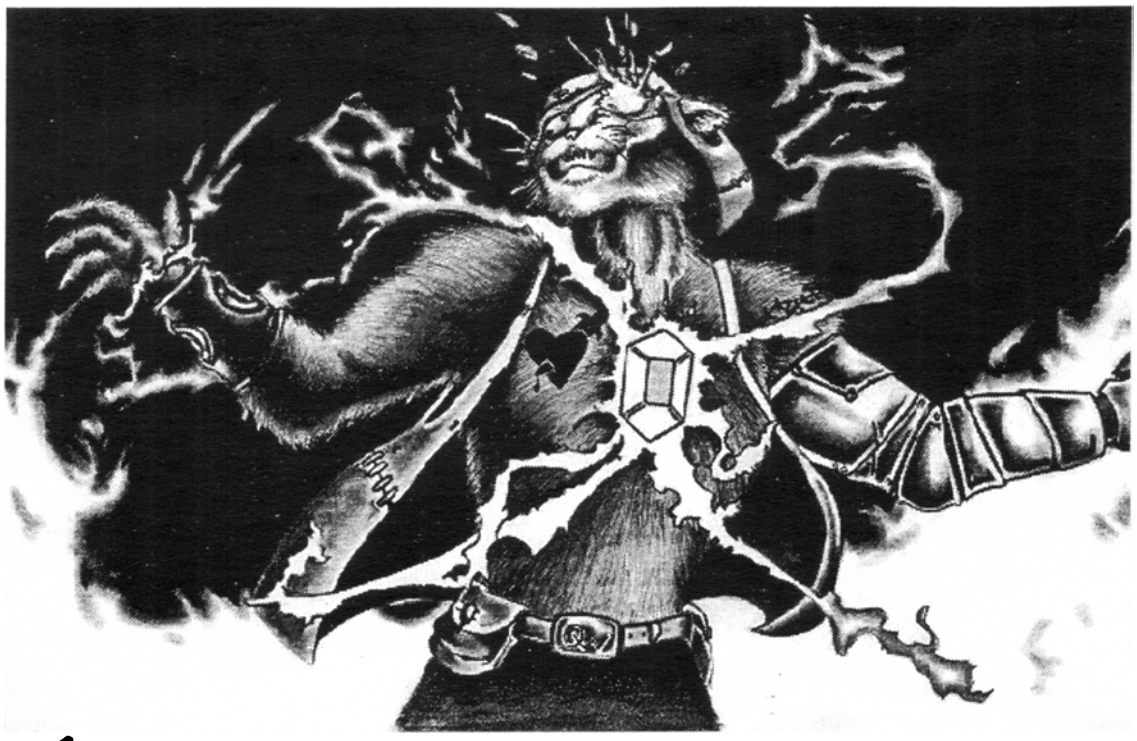
The unlimited edition of *Middle-earth: The Wizards* (which comes to substitute the already out-of-print limited edition, especially dedicated to collectors) is neither more nor less than the original 484 card release, though it does contain a couple of differentiating features. These two touches of distinction are given by the new color of the cards' border, which is now blue in contrast to the black of the previous edition, and by the correction of the errata found in the information of some cards of the original version.

Obviously, this set of cards comes to cover the demand of the new players that join the world of *METW*, who must "resign" themselves to collecting (if that's the case) these blue-bordered cards. However, it is precisely this color what makes these cards not so nice and enjoyable as the original ones. The shade of blue chosen is, for a lot of consulted players, too bright and exaggerated, becoming unbearable for some of them and out-of-target for almost everyone. In my humble opinion, ICE should have opted for another possibility in order to differentiate the cards' editions, maybe through another color (or even another shade of blue) or through some identifying mark, as it happens with the runes in *Middle-earth: The Dragons*) or *Dark Minions*. Personally, I prefer avoiding the blue-bordered cards and, until now, I have been able to keep my play deck as well as my collection "clean."

In spite of the previous paragraph, the balance is rectified by the corrections, a great advantage which eliminates the nuisance of having to browse the errata list for punctual cases in the middle of a game with limited cards.

Definitively, the unlimited edition owns the same virtues of the black-bordered edition, with the addition of the correctness and the drawback of the border color. In the end, it is a question of taste and, of course, of the availability of the limited version in the market.

Reviewer: Marco Antonio Blanco Navarrete



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Pencil, pen, watercolor, and airbrush.

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